SLEEPY HOLLOW
Being the true Storie of one Ichabod Crane and the Headless Horseman

Story by

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Based on
"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"
by Washington Irving

Screenplay by

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THIRD DRAFT
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A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,
of dreams that wave before the half shut eye...

EXT. GNARLED FOREST -- NIGHT

An UGLY MAN charges through on a horse, holding a lantern forward on a long pole. He looks back, terrified.

INSERT TITLE: **1799**
Sleepy Hollow, New York

THUNDEROUS HOOFBEATS are HEARD behind.

The ugly man glances back again. His lantern swings wild...

SHATTERS against a tree. The jammed-up pole SLAMS the ugly man off his horse...

He hits the ground. He runs, trips, falls and scrambles up.

DEEP IN THE FOREST, we glimpse the source of the HOOFBEATS: a HUGE FORM on a HUGE BLACK HORSE, already gone.

The ugly man pushes through thorny bushes. Jagged branches slit his hands and cheeks.

He bursts from the brier patch and tumbles to a trail. He lifts his bloodied face. He runs.

IN THE FOREST BEHIND: the hooves of the black horse rip underbrush. HOOFBEATS DEAFENING. A spur digs into the snorting steed's already bleeding flank.

The pursuer's gloved hand draws a SWORD, blade RINGING.

ON THE TRAIL, the ugly man runs on. The shrill WHISTLE of a SWORD SWING is HEARD as the pursuer blurs past.

The ugly man is still running when his head lolls back, at an impossible angle... tumbles off his shoulders... His headless body hits the dirt.

EXT. CITY STREETS -- NIGHT

Empty cobblestone streets. Crooked buildings. A RAPIDLY CLANGING BELL breaks the silence from afar.

INSERT TITLE: **New York City**

TWO CONSTABLES clamor round a corner, lanterns held high, listening. They rush into an alleyway.

ELSEWHERE, piers border the Hudson River. The BELL is LOUDER. The two constables arrive, searching. No one around. Constable One hefts his pistol, scared.

CONSTABLE ONE
Where are you?!

(CONTINUED)

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Here! Over here!

They hurry to the river's edge. Down a hill, the MAN, another constable, stands with his back to us. He's waist deep in water, tossing away his ALARM BELL.

MAN
I need your help with this.

Constable Two crosses on the pier above. Constable One moves forward, wary. The MAN grunts, lifting something.

CONSTABLE ONE
Constable Crane? Ichabod Crane... is that you?

The MAN turns. Meet ICHABOD CRANE, handsome, eyes piercing.

ICHABOD
Yes, it is me. But, not only me...
(lifting, struggling)
I found someone here...

He drags a bloated MALE CORPSE up from the murky water.

ICHABOD
Someone quite dead.

EXT. WATCHHOUSE/JAIL -- NIGHT

The elderly HIGH CONSTABLE lifts a blanket off the corpse on a wheelbarrow manned by Constable Two. A snobby MAGISTRATE looks on, disgusted. Constable One and Ichabod wait.

HIGH CONSTABLE
Burn it.

CONSTABLE ONE
Yes, sir.

Constable Two wheels the corpse inside. Ichabod's dismayed.

ICHABOD
Just a moment... if I may. It is possible this man was murdered.

HIGH CONSTABLE
He drowned. Anyone could see.

ICHABOD
There are surgical ways of telling how he died... by the water in his lungs...

Ichabod follows the High Constable and Magistrate in.

INT. WATCHHOUSE, NIGHT WATCH QUARTERS -- NIGHT

Constable Two wheels the body ahead past many "booking" tables. A JAILER moves to unlock a massive door.

HIGH CONSTABLE
He will be burned pursuant to statutes of health.

ICHABOD
I could determine if he were dead before he went into the Hudson.

HIGH CONSTABLE
Must we again hear these heretical rantings?

MAGISTRATE
Yes, must we?

ICHABOD
There is nothing heretical about science, sir. The Chinese have written on it for hundreds of years... procedural study used to solve seemingly unsolvable crimes.

The door is opened. The corpse again leads the way.

INT. WATCHHOUSE, JAIL -- NIGHT

A two-tiered prison, alive with MOANS of AGONY and CRIES of INSANITY. Cells are full of wretched men in chains and iron gags. Many are against the bars, watching.

ICHABOD
Our night watch is adequate against fire and some violence, but if we were more often able to ensure justice, after the fact, then criminals would truly have something to fear from law enforcement.

HIGH CONSTABLE
Have they nothing to fear presently?

ICHABOD
Without disrespect, look around you.
(motioning to cells)
We overflow. As do our courts.

HIGH CONSTABLE
And, with disrespect, Constable, if jails and courts overflow, it is testimony to success, not failure.

(CONTINUED)

ICHABOD
But, how many innocents rot here? And, how many victims are buried without reprisal while guilty men roam our streets?

The High Constable reaches a desk, taking a seat. Guards wait to process beaten, bloody prisoners.

HIGH CONSTABLE
Very few, if any.

ICHABOD
Even though I have seen confessions pried from the lips of the accused, often quite literally?

HIGH CONSTABLE
For one who calls himself a Federalist, your mouth reeks of Republican liberalism.

ICHABOD
Not liberalism. Equanimity.

MAGISTRATE
(to High Constable)
Um, sir... might I suggest...

The Magistrate WHISPERS in the High Constable's ear. Ichabod notices with worry that Constables One and Two wheel the corpse onwards into another room.

The magistrate finishes. The High Constable smiles faintly.

HIGH CONSTABLE
(to Ichabod)
There is a farming community upstate, Constable... two days journey north in the Hudson Highlands. It is named Sleepy Hollow. Within a fortnight, three persons have been murdered there. Each with their head lopped cleanly off.
(holds up papers)
The elders of the Hollow have sent dispatches to me, requesting assistance, and now, just this very moment, I have chosen you.

ICHABOD
Chosen me?

HIGH CONSTABLE
These "methods" of yours... there has been no practical application.

ICHABOD
Not for lack of trying.

BURGOMASTER
Just so. Granted. And so you take your experimentations to Sleepy Hollow and catch the murderer who has tainted the place. Bring him here to face our good justice. Will you do this for me?

ICHABOD
(swallowing doubt)
I shall, gladly.

HIGH CONSTABLE
Excellent. Then, you are excused till morning.

Ichabod moves away, heading to where the corpse was taken.

HIGH CONSTABLE
Oh, and, Constable...
(off Ichabod's look)
Do make certain that you meet with success. Otherwise... perhaps you should not come back at all.

The High Constable smiles a sardonic smile.

INT. WATCHHOUSE, INCINERATION ROOM -- NIGHT

The corpse burns in a raging furnace. Flesh sizzles.

Constable One pumps bellows which fan the flames. Ichabod steps from darkness nearby. He watches with bitter regret as the corpse is consumed.

EXT. CITY -- DAY

Market town streets bustle. Filthy. Pigs roam free.

INT. ICHABOD'S HOME, SECOND FLOOR -- DAY

Decorated in Early-American Mad Scientist: books, papers and jars of chemicals. Charts of anatomy above a small bed.

ICHABOD (O.S.)
Such a day for such a sad farewell.
But, this is goodbye, my sweet.

At the window, Ichabod holds a bird cage with a red CARDINAL inside. He opens the cage. The bird flies free.

Ichabod watches it go, then looks down. A COACH halts in the street below. The forlorn DRIVER looks up.

INT. ICHABOD'S COACH -- DAY

In motion. Ichabod absently studies his hands, touching the strange SCARS on both palms: evenly dispersed, tiny dots of tissue. Many scars.

Ichabod lifts a LEATHER SATCHEL, checking its contents.

EXT. UPSTATE FORESTS -- DAY

TWO FAMILIES of MIGRANT WORKERS travel a path, leading over-burdened horses. Ichabod's coach approaches from the other direction. Ichabod looks out, unnerved.

One GAUNT MAN watches Ichabod pass. There is a dead, worried look in the man's eyes. Others stare at Ichabod.

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW, THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD -- DAY

Ichabod faces two massive, vine-covered PILLARS, unsure. He turns to watch the driver lead the coach away.

Ichabod walks between the pillars to a long straight road. He does not notice, above: THREE DEAD RAVENS hang from a tree limb, twine wrapped round their necks.

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW, TOWN SQUARE -- DAY

Ichabod walks on with baggage. The square is empty, a CHURCH and GRAVEYARD at one end. The road ahead is bordered by businesses and homes.

CONVERSATION DRIFTS from a tavern. A criminal sits in stocks. A quiet CRYING is HEARD. Ichabod hears...

He looks for its source. It's from a window above, LOUDER. SOUNDS like the SOBBING of an OLD WOMAN.

EXT. VAN TASSEL ESTATE -- DAY

ICHABOD'S P.O.V.: a BELLTOWER stands tall, like a mast pole with a crow's nest basket atop. There's a man in the basket and a huge BELL.

Ichabod ponders this as he continues. Ahead on a hill: the grand Van Tassel Manor House.

INT. VAN-TASSEL MANOR HOUSE, SITTING ROOM -- DAY

MANY CHILDREN, in a circle, taunt a BLINDFOLDED YOUNG WOMAN spun round by the handsome, barrel-chested man, BROM VAN BRUNT. A few YOUNG MEN and LADIES watch. Brom releases the woman. Everyone quiets and avoids her searching hands.

BLINDFOLDED WOMAN
This is such a silly game.

BROM
Be a sport and stop complaining.

The woman moves to Brom's voice. He backs away, flanked by peers GLENN and THEODORE. Children laugh.

Ichabod enters, clearing his throat. No one notices. The blindfolded woman keeps grasping. One LITTLE GIRL sees Ichabod and goes to him, finger to her lips.

LITTLE GIRL
Play along. You must.

She tugs him. Before Ichabod can protest, he is placed in the blindfolded woman's grip.

BLINDFOLDED WOMAN
There, I have someone. Am I finished?

LITTLE GIRL
You have to tell who it is.

The woman touches Ichabod's face. He is uncomfortable, affected by this caress. Brom watches jealously.

LITTLE GIRL
At least make a guess.

BLINDFOLDED WOMAN
I don't know. Is it Brom Bones?

BROM
Certainly not.

ICHABOD
Excuse me, Miss...
(takes her hands)
They have a laugh at your expense.

She takes the kerchief off to reveal a stunning beauty: KATRINA VAN TASSEL. Ichabod tries to compose himself.

KATRINA
Forgive me, I didn't know.

ICHABOD
I... I am looking for Baltus Van Tassel.

BROM
We haven't heard your name yet, friend.

ICHABOD
Well, unless your name is Baltus, you should not worry over mine.

Brom grabs Ichabod's collar, pissed. Ichabod's baffled.

BROM
You need some manners.

KATRINA
Brom!

Brom looks to her, then reluctantly releases Ichabod.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
What is this, then... ?

BALTUS VAN TASSEL, 45, has entered, a working-class aristocrat. LADY VAN TASSEL, 40, stands behind, a mix of home-spun wife and well-kept lady.

BALTUS
Can I help you, sir?

Ichabod's relieved to have a proper focal point. Children gather around Katrina and hide behind her.

ICHABOD
I have been sent from the city with a letter of introduction. I am told you offer me room and board.

Ichabod hands over papers. Baltus reads, furrows his brow.

ICHABOD
If we could speak alone.

BALTUS
(nods, looks to Katrina)
This is not a time for frivolity, Katrina, is it? Am I mistaken?

KATRINA
They're only children, father.

Baltus snorts, then exits with Ichabod. The others huddle to gossip, except Katrina, who moves beside Lady Van Tassel to watch Ichabod and Baltus walk down the hall.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, PARLOR -- DAY

DOCTOR LANCASTER, 50, dour and always sweaty, takes a seat by the fire, joining Baltus and three other elders. A pretty servant, SARAH, brings a pipe cradle while Lady Van Tassel sets down food. Ichabod is standing.

BALTUS
That will be all, ladies.
(waits as they exit)
We are joined by Doctor Thomas Lancaster, Constable. And to his left are Clergyman Steenwyck and our able magistrate, Samuel Philipse, both keeping order in their own ways.

PHILIPSE is youngest, eyes bloodshot, mug in hand and pipe in mouth. CLERGYMAN STEENWYCK is formidably build, wearing a constant look of disapproval.

BALTUS
I myself am in charge of financial matters and the regulation of currency in our commonweal. And, lastly, this fine fellow is James Hardenbrook, our Notary.

HARDENBROOK is oldest, ancient, with one eye pale and blind.

ICHABOD
An honor, gentlemen. In time I will need every detail of the three murderings you've had, but, for now, I ask only if you have any theory at all as to who the killer might be?

DOCTOR LANCASTER
Excuse me?

ICHABOD
I say, is there any one person suspect in these acts?

DOCTOR LANCASTER
I was afraid of this.

Philipse shoots a look to Baltus. Angst amongst the elders.

PHILIPSE
Well, Constable... are you aware... to be honest, you are not what we expected. We sent for the militia.

ICHABOD
The militia?

FATHER STEENWYCK
Why not tell us what you have heard? Hmm? How much have your superiors bothered to tell you?

ICHABOD
All I know is three are slain, their heads found severed from their bodies...

FATHER STEENWYCK
The heads were not found severed. The heads were not found at all.

Withered Hardenbrook leans forward, his voice cragged.

HARDENBROOK
Taken. Taken by the Headless Horseman. Taken back to hell.

ICHABOD
Pardon me?

BALTUS
You have not been well informed of our troubles, sir. If you would...

Baltus gestures for Ichabod to sit. Baltus lights his pipe.

BALTUS
The Horseman... he was a Hessian mercenary, sent to our shores by German princes to help keep Americans under the thumb of England. However, unlike his compatriots who came as muscle in trade for currency, he came willingly. For love of carnage.

FLASHBACK -- AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD -- DAY

The HESSIAN HORSEMAN rides his black steed into a gory, close-quarters clash, his cloaked uniform adorned with edged weapons. He cuts down Americans left and right.

BALTUS (v.o.)
He was infamous for taking his horse, Daredevil, hard into battle... chopping off heads at full gallop.

He dismounts, hoisting a battle axe. With sword and axe, he annihilates. Blood gushes. Bones crack.

(CONTINUED)

BALTUS (v.o.)
Just to look on him made your blood run cold, for he had filed down his teeth to rapiers... to add to the ferocity of his appearance.

The Horseman lets out a war cry. Jagged teeth. Grotesque.

FLASHBACK -- FOREST BATTLEFIELD -- DAY

Winter. CANNONS can be HEARD BOOMING from afar. Daredevil lies dead in red snow. FOLLOW FOOTPRINTS away...

BALTUS (v.o.)
He would not finally meet his end till the winter of seventy-nine, when New York City was held by Henry Clinton and Washington occupied West Point. It was between those two places, not far from here...

The Horseman flees, cloak flowing, chased by FIVE rag-tag REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIERS. Ahead, a steep, rocky area prevents escape. Soldier One aims a rifle and FIRES...

Blood explodes from the Horseman's arm as he runs. His sword falls from his now functionless hand.

Soldier Two grabs the sword.

At the rocks, the Horseman faces the men. Another Rifleman raises his rifle. The Horseman reaches over his shoulder to grasp a sheathed knife, THROWS --

THOCK! The Rifleman jerks back, knife in his eye socket.

The Horseman readies an axe. The Revolutionaries move in with swords. They battle, STEEL AGAINST STEEL. The Horseman fends off blows from all sides.

Soldier Three lunges, stabs his blade deep into the Horseman's side. The Horseman roars, brings his axe DOWN... BREAKS the sword at the hilt...

An UPWARDS stroke sends Soldier Three head over heels in a fountain of blood.

The Horseman staggers, howling, trying to pull the blade from his ribs. The remaining soldiers close in.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Pipe smoke wafts from Philipse's mouth.

PHILIPSE
Cut off his head with his own sword. It's a legend told for twenty years.

BALTUS
But, only recently has the Headless Hessian been seen prowling the Hollow, in search of a head to suit his shoulders.

ICHABOD
Just a moment...
(sits back, incredulous)
Are you saying it is he?

HARDENBROOK
(aggravated, loud)
When a goblin leaps from the nether world, others follow! Poltergeists of the air, water and earth follow and cheer his desecrations!

Hardenbrook BANGS his cane on a table. Baltus puts a calming hand on senile Hardenbrook's shoulder.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
No one knows why he chose to now to climb out from his grave.

FATHER STEENWYCK
It is very clear why. Citizens here have long tried to hide sins behind closed doors. Their failed faith has saturated the soil and called forth one of Satan's own.

ICHABOD
Excuse me, gentlemen, but... who has seen this Horseman?

BALTUS
Many have.

ICHABOD
Then, name one person who has seen him with their own eyes.

A long wait. No reply from the elders. Ichabod rises.

ICHABOD
While I will do everything I can to find your assassin, I will look for a man of flesh and blood. Not some goblin-demon from hell.

EXT. BELLTOWER FIELD -- EARLY EVENING

The Belltower is covered in defensive spikes. A man climbs down a rope ladder. Below, many ARMED MEN gather. Everyone grim. Philipse moves to the center, on horseback.

PHILIPSE
Gather round! Gather and quiet! The hour has come to choose for this night. Each man's name is in this box and has been checked.

A box is handed up. Ichabod and Baltus arrive on foot at the back of the mob. Ichabod looks...

At a nearby forest, men light TORCH POSTS in a line bordering the forest edge for at least a half mile.

Philipse draws a folded paper from the box, holds it up.

PHILIPSE
May the Lord watch over him...
(unfolds paper)
"Jonathan Masbath." Are you here?

JONATHAN (o.s.)
I am. I take my responsibility.

The crowd parts as JONATHAN MASBATH, a dirt-poor farmer with a bow and quiver of arrows, moves forward. His son, YOUNG MASBATH, 14, grips his arm.

YOUNG MASBATH
No, father. Wait...
(up to Philipse)
He's already been up once. Why does he go again?

JONATHAN
It is a lottery, son. It just as easily might have been one of them.

YOUNG MASBATH
Then... I go with you.

JONATHAN
No. You obey my wishes.
(looks to crowd)
Brom. Look after him, will you?

Brom steps up, nodding. Jonathan kisses his son's cheek, then heads to the rope ladder. Men pat him on the back.

PHILIPSE
Someone leave him a horse.

(CONTINUED)

Young Masbath watches his father go. Brom coaxes him away. At the back of the crowd, Ichabod watches skeptically, looks to Young Masbath as he and Brom pass.

ICHABOD
You worry for naught, little man. Nothing will harm him there.
(looks up, sotto)
It is problems here on the ground you people need begin to worry about.

Ichabod watches Jonathan climb, very high above.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod makes notations in a LEDGER BOOK.

KATRINA (v.o.)
You will dream.

Katrina strolls in, sits on the bed. Ichabod is nervous.

KATRINA
Did they tell? It is something in the air so that dreams come to everyone. According to the elders, an Indian prophet held powwows here before the land was taken, and spells cast then still linger to this day.

ICHABOD
Do you often make a habit of sitting on strange men's beds?

KATRINA
You are horribly old-fashioned, aren't you?

ICHABOD
Feel free to form your own opinion.
(facing his ledger)
Though it appears you already have.

KATRINA
Well, I intended to apologize for the behavior of my friend Brom Van Brunt, but it seems I've made matters worse.
(getting up to go)
I'll leave you to your business.

ICHABOD
Excuse me... I should apologize. I, um... I.. have no great love of...

KATRINA
Other people?

ICHABOD
Small talk.

KATRINA
It might have been more. Might have been positively grand talk.

Ichabod offers his chair, backing away. Seeing it is the only one, he remains standing. Katrina sits.

KATRINA
Is it me, or are you this nervous around all women?

ICHABOD
Perhaps it is because your suitor's hands were recently very nearly wrapped around my throat.

KATRINA
My suitor?

ICHABOD
The massive fellow... Brom. For someone you call "friend," he misplaces a good portion of jealousy.

KATRINA
He has proposed to me twice.

ICHABOD
Which may explain his temperament. To have asked twice means the answer was "no" at least once.

Katrina looks down, discards this with a smile.

KATRINA
I've read a great deal about your New York City. Do be a dear and tell me all about it. Sounds like an extraordinary place to live a life.

ICHABOD
Extra ordinary, yes. But first, you tell me about the Headless Horseman.

EXT. BELLTOWER FIELD -- NIGHT

The torches burn bright. ABOVE, in the Belltower, Jonathan Masbath loads a rifle. THUNDER BOOMS.

Jonathan stands, looking to a sky that is all stars and moon. A HORSE is HEARD SHRIEKING. Below, the horse tied at the base of the tower is spooked.

A COMMOTION is HEARD, ground rumbling. Jonathan grips a rifle, cocks it and moves to look...

At the forest edge, a herd of deer stampedes out. They sprint past the tower and across the field.

Jonathan crosses to watch the herd scatter. He crosses back to peer at the forest. Bad news...

A thick FOG creeps from the woods.

As the fog overtakes the base of each torch, a tentacle of mist snakes up to the flame, killing it. All along the forest, arms of vapor snuff torches... one by one by one...

Above, Jonathan sights the rifle along the trees.

JONATHAN
Come out, devil... come...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod leans on a dresser. Katrina's still seated.

KATRINA
Not all think it is the Horseman. Many say witches come from the Western Woods to steal skulls for their cauldrons. Some believe a person in this very town kneels before Lucifer, offering death as tribute. And, still others believe none of it.

ICHABOD
Are you so superstitious?

KATRINA
To call a person superstitious is to imply they fear magic, but not all magic is black.

ICHABOD
There is no such thing as magic.

KATRINA
Really? Then... what is your rebuttal to those romantic poets claiming proof of magic in a rose at full bloom, or even in a teardrop?

ICHABOD
Poets have silly notions about plants and bodily secretions.

KATRINA
(laughs)
You are funny.

Ichabod doesn't get what's so funny about that. The DISTANT TOLL of a BELL is HEARD. Katrina looks fearful.

She goes to open a window. The BELL TOLLS...

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW, OVERVIEW -- NIGHT

... TOLLS mournfully over farms and forests...

EXT. FARM -- NIGHT

... TOLLS as a MAN comes from his barn, listening, then sprinting towards his home.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- NIGHT

... TOLLS across the deserted square.
Windows go dark. Shutters are slammed shut.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE -- NIGHT

... TOLLS. Ichabod bounds out to the lawn, halting to listen. Katrina and Baltus come out on the porch.

BALTUS
Constable, where are you going!?

... TOLLS... TOLLS... then, SILENCE. Ichabod chases away.

BALTUS
Come back, sir... !
(watches him go)
Madness.

Baltus ushers Katrina back in. The door slams.

EXT. BELLTOWER FIELD -- NIGHT

Ichabod charges across the rocky field. He slows, awed...

The Belltower is down, its mast is splintered. The horse is gone. Ichabod moves to where the crow's nest lies smashed. No sign of Jonathan.

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW FOREST -- NIGHT

Jonathan runs past, gripping his bow. It's QUIET... till HOOFBEATS are HEARD in pursuit.

Trees are silhouetted against the sky. As HOOFBEATS get LOUDER, branches bend like arms and fingers yearning to touch. As HOOFBEATS ROAR PAST, the trees relax.

FURTHER ON, Jonathan runs. WIND begins to BLOW.

BEHIND, in motion, WE SEE Daredevil's snorting visage; eyes lizard-like, with vertical slits literally aglow.

The Horseman's hand yanks a wooden WAR HAMMER from a saddle mount. (No clear view of the Horseman.)

HORSEMAN'S P.O.V.: closing in on Jonathan.

Jonathan is overtaken. The Horseman swings the hammer -- WHOOMP -- sends Jonathan sprawling.

HOOFBEATS FADE. Jonathan tries to get up, but pain shoots through him. He crawls to retrieve his bow.

Against a tree, he takes an arrow from his shoulder quiver and readies it. Waiting. A metal TAPPING is HEARD O.S. CLINK... CLINK... CLINK. A HORSE SNORTS.

Jonathan pulls the bow taut, pained, lips bloody.

Elsewhere, Daredevil approaches slow. The Horseman taps his sword on his spur, CLINK... CLINK... CLINK...

Foliage moves as the Horseman's form pushes through.

Jonathan releases -- the arrow WHISTLES...

THWACK! -- imbeds in the Horseman's chest.

CLINK... CLINK... CLINK... continues. Jonathan readies a second arrow. Pulls and releases -- O.S. THWACK!

CLINK... CLINK... CLINK... Jonathan cries out, crawling away desperately. Crawling through underbrush, over roots and rocks. CLINK... CLINK... CLINK... Jonathan gives up, spent, face to the dirt. He closes his eyes.

CLINKING STOPS. Daredevil halts astride Jonathan; two legs on each side of Jonathan's body.

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW FARMLAND -- MORNING

Baltus and a large, DULLARDLY MAN ride. Behind, Ichabod rides with Magistrate Philipse.

(CONTINUED)

Ichabod is not adept at riding his old nag, Gunpowder.

ICHABOD
The Van Garretts died first; a man and his son, survived by a wife and two infants. And the Widow Windsor was next...

PHILIPSE
And now Jonathan Masbath.

ICHABOD
(looks back, ponders)
Why would he flee this direction, with so much open ground to cross before he reached cover?

PHILIPSE
He would not have gone into the Western Woods. No sane man would.

Philipse drinks from a whiskey flask, sees Ichabod watching and offers some. Ichabod declines.

PHILIPSE
Van Ripper there...

Ahead, the dullard, VAN RIPPER, sloppily spits tobacco.

PHILIPSE
... found the body this morning.
(pause)
You do believe now, don't you?

ICHABOD
Believe?

LADY VAN TASSEL
You said yourself. What mere man could have downed the Belltower?

ICHABOD
It is a prime tenet of science, Philipse, that because one thing appears improbable does not mean you embrace the utterly fantastical.

PHILIPSE
You need less big words, and more common sense.

Philipse fingers an IRON KEY talisman he wears on a cord.

ICHABOD
What is that you wear?

PHILIPSE
My talisman. It will protect against the Horseman if I show a brave face. But, I cannot run. If I run in fear, it is worthless.

ICHABOD
Well... so much for common sense.

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW FORESTS, FURTHER ON -- MORNING

Brom and Baltus stand at a HORSE'S CORPSE amongst jagged boulders. The flesh has been stripped, guts exposed. Philipse and Ichabod arrive and dismount.

BALTUS
Was this Jonathan's?

BROM
Yes. Seems she panicked across here and broke two legs.

ICHABOD
Who took the meat?

BALTUS
Must have been the Redman. A Lenape Indian lives in the Western Woods.

ICHABOD
These woods of yours sound a bit crowded, what with all the witches, ghouls and Indians living there.

Brom climbs up onto his own horse, a black beauty.

BROM
There's only one Lenape. He eats small animals and lost children... and the occasional constable when he can get it.

Brom rides. Ichabod goes to the dead horse, digs in his satchel for a thin iron tool, which he uses it to pry off one HORSESHOE. A WHISTLE is HEARD O.S.

Everyone looks far ahead to where Van Ripper has ridden. The doctor and others are there. Van Ripper waves.

INT. FOREST, MASBATH MURDER SITE -- MORNING

Doctor Lancaster stands with SEVERAL ARMED MEN. A coffin on a cart is covered by a blanket. Ichabod is crouched nearby.

ICHABOD
Why did you move the body, Doctor?

DOCTOR LANCASTER
To place it inside its coffin.

Ichabod, nods, vaguely annoyed. He puts the horseshoe into a hoofprint in the dirt. It fits.

Ichabod rises, walks, studying the ground, kicking up leaves. Brom, Van Ripper, Baltus and Philipse watch.

Ichabod finds a deep hoofprint. Huge. He compares the horseshoe. The hoofprint is much larger.

Ichabod pulls his satchel off his shoulder, takes out a bowl, bottle of water and bag of brown powder; begins mixing water and powder with a fork to make plaster.

The others watch, finding this bizarre, whispering. Brom comes up to stand over Ichabod, irritated.

BROM
What the hell are you doing?

ICHABOD
(ignoring pause)
You are the blacksmith. Ever shod a horse with a hoof this large?

BROM
Never. A shoe that size I would have remembered.

Ichabod starts to fill the print with plaster.

ICHABOD
Van Ripper. Can you show where the body lay?

VAN RIPPER
I can show exactly.

Van Ripper dismounts, wiping tobacco drool. Ichabod rises to follow with his satchel.

VAN RIPPER
Here... in front of this oak, facing north. Horrible...

ICHABOD
To the best of your recollection, where did the open wound fall?

Van Ripper points. Ichabod takes a BOTTLE of WHITE POWDER from his pocket.

He uncorks the bottle, cautiously pouring powder in an X on the dirt there, then waiting.

A chemical reaction causes the powder to bubble a bit.

ICHABOD
There was not much blood, was there?

VAN RIPPER
I didn't see none.

Ichabod stands, puzzled. He walks to the coffin cart, rolling up his sleeves. Others come to watch, but keep distance. Ichabod removes the blanket...

Reveals Jonathan's headless corpse.

Philipse can't look. Ichabod takes strange spectacles from his satchel; wire-framed with many lenses. MAGNIFICATION SPECTACLES. He examines the gross neck wound, sniffs it.

He pokes the flesh and severed spinal cord.

ICHABOD
No bleeding.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
What is that?

ICHABOD
This should have bled by the pint.
Yet, no blistering or scorched flesh.
How... ? Whatever weapon was used...
it cauterized somehow....

Ichabod straightens, eyes weirdly big in the spectacles.

ICHABOD
It instantly burnt the wound shut.

EXT. CHURCHYARD AND CEMETERY -- DAY

A coffin in a grave. Headstone reads "MASBATH, 1799." A CROWD gathered. Young Masbath broods. Clergyman Steenwyck steps forward to take a handful of newly dug dirt.

Men with guns stand at the outskirts, like on guard.

Steenwyck sprinkles dirt into the grave with prayerful words. In the crowd, people whisper. They steal glances at Ichabod, who stands with the Van Tassels.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, DINING/VARIOUS ROOMS -- DAY

Dining room. Sarah and two other servants collect plates. A few people still sup, including Van Ripper, his warty WIFE and two kids. Van Ripper guzzles ale, laughs at something his also drunk wife says.

IN the HALL and FOYER, funeral goers socialize quietly. FURTHER ON, in the SITTING ROOM, men smoke. Young Masbath is confronting Ichabod, who is leaving...

ICHABOD
I am not here for revenge. I am here to bring justice.

YOUNG MASBATH
Whatever. You still need a second to tend to your things.

ICHABOD
I manage fine alone.

YOUNG MASBATH
I deserve to help you. Don't you see how much this means? My father... he... he was a good man...

ICHABOD
(faces Masbath)
Young Masbath, I am sorry for your loss. It is a great and sad tragedy. However... I cannot be the one to look after you now.

YOUNG MASBATH
(angry)
I did not ask you to, did I?

Young Masbath exits. Ichabod remains impassive.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FRONT PORCH -- DAY

Ichabod comes out. KILLIAN, a dashingly rustic man, carries his son, THOMAS, 5, and chats with Baltus. Doctor Lancaster peers off at something through a SPYGLASS.

BALTUS
Hail, Constable. How are you?

ICHABOD
Well enough. Your gathering does honor to the deceased.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR LANCASTER
(still using spyglass)
We must be a curious sight to him.

ICHABOD
What are you spying on?

DOCTOR LANCASTER
(offers the spyglass)
The Lenape. He comes to gawk at civilization from time to time.

ICHABOD'S POINT OF VIEW -- THROUGH SPYGLASS

Searching a line of trees and foliage far away...

DOCTOR LANCASTER (O.S.)
Do you see the Redskinned bastard?

There he is -- the LENAPE. A towering savage with misshapen features covered in tumors. He ducks away.

BACK TO SCENE ON PORCH

Ichabod lowers the spyglass, a little awed.

ICHABOD
He is a behemoth.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
A diseased monster.

BALTUS
If you gentlemen will excuse the doctor and I... we have financial matters to discuss.

Ichabod and Killian nod as Baltus and Lancaster head in.

KILLIAN
Master Crane, sir. I'm glad we have time alone. You've been told plenty about the Horseman, I'm certain.

ICHABOD
More than enough, actually.
(tired laugh)
I beg you, no more, please.

KILLIAN
No, sir, no. If you ask me, I say you just laid eyes on our murderer through that glass.

Ichabod ponders, folding the spyglass.

ICHABOD
Tell me something.
(pause)
What becomes of Young Masbath?

KILLIAN
Van Ripper and his wife agreed to take him. They have children and a good home and good land.

Ichabod nods. He turns to look THROUGH THE WINDOW. In the DINING ROOM, Van Ripper rises, ill. His wife questions his health, but he holds her off and vomits.

Ichabod notes this with a deep sigh.

EXT. VAN TASSEL ORCHARD -- EARLY EVENING

Ocher dusk. Ichabod rides to Young Masbath, seated on the ground, miserable. Young Masbath does not look up.

ICHABOD
Find yourself a place in the servants' residence and wake me before dawn. Our first task will be an unsavory one.

Ichabod rides. Young Masbath runs to his horse and follows.

EXT. CHURCHYARD AND CEMETERY -- DAWN

Steenwyck is on horseback, looking down at Ichabod, furious.

FATHER STEENWYCK
It is sacrilege!

ICHABOD
I cannot proceed without examining the previous victims.

Steenwyck looks to men with shovels. Killian's there. Philipse, hung-over, stands beside Young Masbath.

FATHER STEENWYCK
Magistrate Philipse, surely you can stop this.

Philipse just looks up with a helpless expression.

FATHER STEENWYCK
I will not allow it. I will not!

ICHABOD
Protest to my superiors if you like.

FATHER STEENWYCK
Your superiors are two days away!

ICHABOD
Then, you should have left two days ago, because I have men willing to help me today.

Ichabod motions. Killian leads the men to the graveyard. Steenwyck watches, enraged. He kicks his horse and rides. Philipse looks worried.

EXT. CHURCHYARD AND CEMETERY -- LATER MORNING (TIME CUT)

A PSALM is HEARD READ by STEENWYCK O.S. while a coffin is exhumed. Ichabod guides the lifting. The coffin is put near the headstone "WINDSOR." Ichabod looks...

At the church, Steenwyck faces about fifty people who now take up the PRAYER.

Across the cemetery, two coffins, one small, one large, are pried open. "VAN GARRETT, 1799." Killian leads the effort with Young Masbath's aid...

The lids come off, revealing the HEADLESS BODIES of a MAN and a little BOY. Young Masbath backs away.

At the "WINDSOR" coffin, nails creak as Ichabod opens the lid. WE DO NOT SEE inside, but when Ichabod does, he is aghast. He looks to the men, angry.

ICHABOD
Why was I not told of this?

No answer. Killian arrives, nods solemnly.

KILLIAN
The Widow Windsor.

ICHABOD
Is that all you say? Look at her.

KILLIAN
It's not something people speak of openly. She did not remarry.

Ichabod kneels, studying. Now, WE SEE: the belly of the headless corpse is bulbous, because the Widow Windsor was very far along in a pregnancy.

Ichabod notices: a tear in the cloth of widow's blouse. He reaches through the tear, feeling the stomach.

He straightens, greatly troubled.

INT. DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, MEDICAL ROOM -- MORNING

Scissors cut open the widow's blouse. There's an inch-long WOUND on the moldering belly; a sword puncture.

Ichabod examines the corpse on a table. Lancaster watches, anxiously mopping his face. Young Masbath's in a corner. Ichabod goes to write in his ledger full of notes.

ICHABOD
What is the common thread between these victims?

YOUNG MASBATH
I'm sure I don't know.

ICHABOD
We must discover it. The reason the murderer chose these persons.

Ichabod goes to look at the widow's corpse, pondering.

ICHABOD
The wounds are the same. Cauterized. No chopping or half-measures either. One stroke took the head. Have you seen, doctor... ?
(pointing to it)
Even the spinal bone... sliced as smooth as butter.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
I do not care. You are welcome to use my work area, but I beg you... return her to her resting place.

ICHABOD
In time, doctor. Soon as I finish.

Ichabod picks up an iron knife. He looks to Young Masbath.

ICHABOD
You should step outside.

EXT. CHURCHYARD, CEMETERY -- EARLY EVENING

Ichabod and others restore graves. Ichabod looks to the church, where Clergyman Steenwyck stands in the door.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER STEENWYCK
The devil sent you, Ichabod Crane.
The Lord will not forgive your sins.

Steenwyck shuts the creaky doors.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod sleeps, dreaming...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- FARMLAND -- DAY

A young BOY, 10, stands in a wheat field with his back to us. A FEMALE VOICE is HEARD FAINTLY, getting LOUDER.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Ichabod! Ichabod... come along.

The boy, YOUNG ICHABOD, turns, smiling. He runs. We FOLLOW to a clearing behind a frontier home. MOTHER waits. Lovely woman. She kisses him.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Dark. Young Ichabod, in bed, has one eye open. Across the room, Mother has her back to him. She's WHISPERING something to no one. She turns...

Young Ichabod pretends he is asleep.

A DRAWER is HEARD SHUTTING. Mother exits. Ichabod gets up, curious, opens a drawer... finds something behind clothing.

It's a piece of reed grass, woven into an elaborate pattern with shafts of wheat twisted into the center. Young Ichabod replaces it, closes the drawer.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- MARKET SQUARE -- DAY

A busy, muddy street lined by wares and produce. Young Ichabod walks with FATHER, an emotionless man. Father stops to examine tools. Young Ichabod stays by him, but something captures his attention...

Across the way, Mother is involved in a argument with a FREAKISH-LOOKING WOMAN. They shout. People stop to watch. Can't make out words, but Freakish Woman is furious.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- STORM SKY -- NIGHT

LIGHTNING flashes over tree tops. THUNDER BOOMS.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod jerks awake in his bed.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Ichabod enters with a lantern and his ledger. He sits, studies notes, then notices there's a light down the hall.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SEWING ROOM -- NIGHT

Opposite an elaborate loom, Katrina reads by candlelight. She looks up, seeing Ichabod enter.

ICHABOD
Sorry for disturbing you. I thought a forgotten candle was burning.

Katrina self-consciously closes her shabby book, puts it with another on her lap and covers them.

KATRINA
You do not disturb me. Please stay. Having trouble sleeping?

ICHABOD
May I ask... why do you cover your book that way?

KATRINA
You pay great attention to small things. I hide these as I hide all my books. Father would not approve, lest it were the Bible.

ICHABOD
I, um... I have something to show you, if you have a moment.

Ichabod sits, looking through his ledger.

KATRINA
These are strange... may I?

She takes his hand, spreads the fingers to the palm. She touches the many evenly spaced scars.

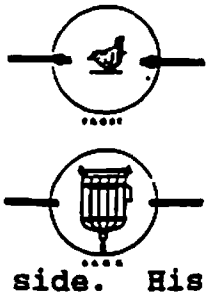
KATRINA
These scars. How did you get them?

ICHABOD
I have had them since childhood. I cannot remember what from.

(CONTINUED)

KATRINA
It would be interesting to find out.

Their eyes meet. Ichabod gets back to the ledger. Katrina seems to relish the effect she has. Ichabod finds a paper disk on string, illustrated thusly:



ICHABOD
Here it is. A bird on one side. His cage on the other. Now, stare at it.
(spinning it)
The bird seems to be in his cage.

KATRINA
Yes, he does. May I try?

Ichabod gives it. She spins it, smiling.

ICHABOD
He only appears to be inside the cage. The point being...

KATRINA
You made this, and the drawings?

ICHABOD
Yes, but listen. The illusion is easily explained. The eye retains each image, till they combine. And yet, some would call this toy magic.

KATRINA
Don't you see why? Look closely a moment. Put your intellect aside.
(spinning it)
Can't you see what is inexplicable?

Ichabod watches it spin. He shakes his head, unimpressed.

KATRINA
Oh, you are hopeless. May I keep it at least?

ICHABOD
If you want. But...

KATRINA
Then, I also have a gift for you. True magic which even you will not be able to deny.

(CONTINUED)

She hands him a book. "ROMEO AND JULIET." Ichabod stands, offering it back, but she will not take it.

ICHABOD
Thank you. No. Here...

KATRINA
I insist that you have it.

ICHABOD
(resigned, leaving)
Very well. But, it will only sit gathering dust.

KATRINA
That would be a pity. Those words might show you something you've never seen before.

Ichabod stops at the door, looks back. He exits.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE -- NIGHT

A light glows in Ichabod's window. LOOKING IN: Ichabod's in bed, fully dressed. He sits up. Pause. He crosses to pick up "Romeo and Juliet." He begins to read.

EXT. PHILIPSE'S FARM -- DUSK

Ichabod walks with Philipse. Young Masbath follows with the horses. CICADAS CHATTER from a vast corn field.

PHILIPSE
Not more than a year ago, a mob hung a man for stealing a horse. For stealing a horse! And, you dig up our dead.

ICHABOD
Are you saying I should be frightened? Is this a message passed on from Clergyman Steenwyck?

The CICADAS SUDDENLY go SILENT. Young Masbath notices.

PHILIPSE
We are farmers here, not lawyers or bankers, or even constables. Every penny we earn comes from what we send down the Hudson.

ICHABOD
I know it.

PHILIPSE
Um... excuse me, sirs...

JONATHAN
(still to Ichabod)
Because of the Horseman, our migrant workers flee for their lives. There is a danger that our crops will rot. So, if you are going to help us, you stop the Horseman. That is your task... to kill an undead thing.

Young Masbath looks to a fenced grazing area, worried. The sheep there are agitated, all running one direction -- away.

ICHABOD
Listen to what you say....

PHILIPSE
No, you listen! You may think we are a pack of superstitious dullards...

ICHABOD
At times I do.

YOUNG MASBATH
Sirs... please!

PHILIPSE
What will it take for you to realize this is no laughing matter?

The horses go crazy, braying and rearing. The reins yank Young Masbath off his feet as the horses flee.

Ichabod and Philipse look to Masbath. A SOUND is HEARD, distant: THUNDERING HOOFBEATS. Wind kicks up. HOOFBEATS seem to come FROM ALL DIRECTIONS.

Philipse looks to the corn field. A flock of birds alights; a great sheet of black against the sky.

PHILIPSE
Oh my... oh my oh my oh my...

Philipse runs towards his house, past Masbath. HOOFBEATS are LOUDER, CLOSER. Ichabod faces the corn field.

The field explodes open, stalks bending to make way as the Headless Horseman gallops into view atop Daredevil.

Young Masbath runs, following Philipse.

Ichabod's stunned. He looks down to draw his flintlock pistol, but the Horseman blows by before he can raise it. A blast of air knocks Ichabod off his feet.

(CONTINUED)

The Horseman chases Masbath and Philipse.

Ichabod follows.

The Horseman draws his sword.

Young Masbath falls in the grass...

Daredevil's pounding hooves will certainly crush him.

Daredevil leaps over Young Masbath, continuing the charge.

Philipse has a long way to go before home. He looks over his shoulder. No way he'll make it.

Ichabod, running, watches Philipse slow.

Philipse gathers all his courage and stops, turning. The Horseman is closing, sword held high.

Philipse raises his talisman.

ICHABOD
Philipse!

Philipse holds the talisman up, trying to be fearless. The Horseman swings -- WE HEAR the CLANK of sword on talisman...

Philipse's severed head spins. His body falls and folds.

Ichabod runs past Young Masbath.

The Horseman halts just as Ichabod reaches a point in front of dead Philipse, aiming his pistol. Daredevil lets out a SCREECHY CRY. The Horseman rides toward Ichabod.

Ichabod gets on one knee, trying to steady his pistol. The Horseman closes. Ichabod sweats bullets. FIRES...

The slug SLAMS the Horseman dead center -- bursts through and rends his uniform without slowing him.

The Horseman is almost on Ichabod. Ichabod cringes, arms up... as the Horseman passes.

The Horseman leans to skewer Philipse's head with his sword.

With the head as his prize, the Horseman races away.

Ichabod gets up, watches the Horseman head to the forest. Ichabod looks to Young Masbath, finds his legs will not support him, falls, trembling. THUNDER BELLOWS.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALL -- NIGHT

Lady Van Tassel comes to a door, knocks. Sarah stands behind with a tray of food. Young Masbath is seated near.

LADY VAN TASSEL
(to Young Masbath)
Has he not come out at all?

Young Masbath shakes his head.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

KNOCKING is HEARD. Ichabod sleeps restlessly.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

THUNDER BOOMS. WIND and POUNDING RAIN blast open a window. Mother comes to it, then moves to comfort fearful Young Ichabod in bed.

MOTHER'S VOICE (v.o.)
Don't be afraid... don't be afraid.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S HOME -- DAY

A keyhole. Young Ichabod's eye peers in...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- P.O.V. THROUGH KEYHOLE

Mother is kneeled before flour on the floor. She draws patterns in it, whispering. She blows the flour away.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S HOME -- DAY

The Freakish Woman (who argued with Mother) walks towards the home, supported by a SAD MAN. She weeps, carrying something in a blanket.

Young Ichabod comes a window, watching, scared.

The Freakish Woman is so weak that she falls. The blanket opens... the corpse of an infant tumbles to the dirt. The Freakish Woman's WAILING GROWS LOUDER.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- FRONT OF YOUNG ICHABOD'S HOME -- NIGHT

TWO MEN in black drag Mother to a coach. She looks back, fearful, pulled along. A THIRD MAN in black follows.

(CONTINUED)

Young Ichabod struggles as Father restrains him.

YOUNG ICHABOD
No... mother... no... !

The Third Man peers back, a grey-haired, Cotton Mather-ish man with a villainous face.

FREAKISH WOMAN (v.o.)
The night of the great storm, I saw her cross my windows.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- COURTROOM -- DAY

Many people in the gallery. The Third Man stands in front of the tearful Freakish Woman in the witness box.

THIRD MAN
You are certain it was she?

FREAKISH WOMAN
In the lighting, I did see her.
(points)
Her. Lady Crane...

Mother sits in shackles.

FREAKISH WOMAN
I will never forget. The next moment, I found my infant dead... with the blood welt on his breast.

Those in attendance cry out at this. Ichabod is seated beside Father, eyes filled with tears.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

As before, a STORM RAGES. Ichabod is in Mother's arms.

FREAKISH WOMAN (v.o.)
The night of the great storm, I saw her cross my windows.

MOTHER
Don't be afraid...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- DAY

KNOCKING is HEARD. Ichabod gasps awake.

KATRINA (O.S.)
Constable Crane?

Ichabod looks at his hands balled into fists. He opens them -- has ONE HALF of PHILIPSE'S TALISMAN in each palm.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Katrina holds a tray of food. The DOOR is HEARD UNLOCKING.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Katrina enters. Ichabod sits at his work table.

KATRINA
Are you hungry?

Ichabod shakes his head, won't look up. Katrina crosses.

She begins picking up pieces of the PLASTER HOOFPRINT CAST which lies shattered on the floor.

KATRINA
You promised justice.

ICHABOD
If these are the random stalkings of a monster, what good am I?

KATRINA
People have put their trust in you.

ICHABOD
They have done nothing of the sort.

KATRINA
Won't they still have that justice?
(patience waning)
Or, was it a vain promise?

Ichabod stews, head in his hands. Someone is HEARD RUNNING... Young Masbath enters, frightened.

YOUNG MASBATH
Constable Crane... something has happened.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS -- DAY

The Lenape Indian hangs dead in a tree, lynched. TOWNSFOLK are gathered. Ichabod makes his way through, followed by Young Masbath, looking up.

BROM (o.s.)
We do not need you, Constable...

Brom strides towards Ichabod from a group of men spreading a sheet under the tree. Van Ripper's there.

BROM
The men who did this have been taken. We do not need you here.

Brom points to where TWO FILTHY MEN in chains sit in a horse-drawn cart. An armed man guards them.

ONE FILTHY MAN
You should thank us. The killings will end. We saved you all!

The armed man shoves the filthy man to shut him up.

BROM
They spend two days in chains.

ICHABOD
Two days... ? For murder?

FATHER STEENWYCK
For poaching. Or, would you remake our laws now that Magistrate Philipse has given up the ghost?

ICHABOD
Does that look like an animal hanging?

BROM
Looks like an Indian.

Van Ripper cuts the noose rope at the trunk. The Lenape corpse free falls, landing hard.

The Lenape lies in a heap on the sheet. Van Ripper and others come to lift the sheet with the Lenape in the middle. Ichabod watches, noticing...

The Lenape wears a WOVEN PIECE of REED GRASS a cord on his loin cloth, twisted in a pattern.

ICHABOD
Wait. Give me a moment...

Ichabod kneels. He removes the woven piece, looking across the diseased Lenape's body. Something else...

The Lenape's mouth is agape; teeth rotting. Ichabod looks around, finds a twig. He uses it to pull the Lenape's mouth open... gets close to peer inside the Lenape's mouth.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- DAY

A DRAWING of the Lenape's WOVEN PIECE in Ichabod's ledger. The piece lies near.

Ichabod sits staring at it, trance-like. Masbath waits. Long silence.

ICHABOD
The Lenape Indian had much to tell once I opened his mouth.

YOUNG MASBATH
How could he?

ICHABOD
His teeth. Someone had cut them and chipped off rotten pieces far back in his mouth. The Lenape could not have done that for himself.
(closes his journal)
Someone out there cared for him.

Ichabod rises, deciding. He picks up his satchel and exits. Young Masbath is surprised. He follows.

EXT. WINDMILL -- DAY

A massive, wooden WINDMILL, raised off the ground on a center post. Ichabod and Masbath walk to it.

INT. WINDMILL -- DAY

Ichabod and Young Masbath enter via a ladder from the underbelly. Gears and counter wheels turn millstones. A few men work in the grain powder filled air.

Ichabod leads the way to a staircase, up twists and turns.

YOUNG MASBATH
Where are we going?

ICHABOD
Up.

EXT. WINDMILL ROOF -- DAY

Ichabod and Young Masbath climb out a door to the roof. The rotors spin nearby. Ichabod searches the countryside.

Below, MANY MEN are ride up the long straight road.

ICHABOD
What is it?

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG MASBATH
It's payment day. Loan monies are given to Baltus the last day each month. Almost everyone borrows... for tools or to hire workers.

Ichabod sits, takes a bowl from his bag and gives it to Masbath, then produces a bottle of water... fills the bowl.

ICHABOD
(points)
Out there. What do you see?

YOUNG MASBATH
The Western Woods.

ICHABOD
Look again.

A plumb of smoke rises from woods, far.

YOUNG MASBATH
Smoke. Chimney smoke.

Ichabod holds a piece of straw in his mouth, rubs the point of a sewing needle against a small BLACK ROCK.

ICHABOD
Are you familiar with magnets?

YOUNG MASBATH
What kind of nuts?

ICHABOD
Not for eating, I assure you. Watch here.

Ichabod shows the magnet grab the needle. Young Masbath is amazed, reaching for it. Ichabod watches him play with it.

YOUNG MASBATH
It's spectacular.

ICHABOD
(smiles, pause)
Yes... I suppose it is. Keep it.

YOUNG MASBATH
No, I couldn't...

ICHABOD
I have others. All I need is this.

Ichabod takes the needle, poking its butt end into the tip of the straw. Young Masbath studies the rock, pockets it.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG MASBATH
Thank you.

ICHABOD
(nods, almost shy)
Now, hold the bowl steady. Back to business.

Young Masbath lifts the bowl. Ichabod drops the in needle/straw, which floats and turns compass-like.

ICHABOD
If the Western Woods are truly the Devil's Glen, we will see for ourselves.

YOUNG MASBATH
(uneasy)
Father said witches live there.

ICHABOD
Witches do not exist. However...

Ichabod uses a knife to notch the bowl lip where the needle points, then surveys the smoke, making a second notch.

ICHABOD
Not long ago, I would have said the same for Headless Horseman.

KATRINA (o.s.)
Constable... !

Katrina's on horseback below, unhappy.

KATRINA
I need to speak with you. Alone.

EXT. VAN TASSEL GREAT LAWN -- DAY

Ichabod and Katrina lead their horses. A heated argument.

KATRINA
Why would you do such a thing?

ICHABOD
No stone may be left unturned. It may appear harsh...

KATRINA
I have misjudged you I think. I did not imagine you were so cruel.

(CONTINUED)

ICHABOD
You are not regarding it in full. The Widow Windsor had been run through by a sword. I followed the bloodless wound; a wound whose path I could not comprehend till I had seen the Horseman with my own eyes.

KATRINA
What are you on about?

ICHABOD
The child she carried was eight months grown at least... near to birthing. The sword had pierced its tiny heart exactly.

KATRINA
Must I hear this?

ICHABOD
There was no blind stabbing. This singular thrust found its target omnipotently, as if the Horseman made certain the unborn child died with its mother.

KATRINA
And this gives worth to butchery?

ICHABOD
It was not butchery.

KATRINA
What is it then? Scientific method? How can any of this matter in the slightest?

ICHABOD
I have no solution for its meaning yet, but I could not just ignore it.

KATRINA
Take a lesson from Young Masbath's desires, Ichabod Crane. He follows with you to avenge his father's death. That I understand. But, what do you want?

ICHABOD
To avenge his father, and the others.

KATRINA
But, why? Tell me why.

Ichabod struggles for a reply.

KATRINA
You falter with your answer because you strive without putting the whole of your heart into it. Can't you see? You'll bring dignity to the dead even if you have to chop them into little pieces to do it.

ICHABOD
(fed up, growing anger)
If it had been surgery on a living person, done to save that person's life, you would not question it. Not for a moment. So, let me be the first to tell you, dear girl... on the other side of these sheltering mountains, a whole world has advanced beyond such plebeian thinking as yours. And someday, no matter how much you fear it, that world will come to roust Sleepy Hollow out of its slumber.

Katrina storms away. Ichabod's already regretting.

EXT. BELLTOWER FIELD -- DAY

Ichabod and Young Masbath ride to the Western Woods, horses loaded for expedition. At the Belltower remnants, Ichabod slows, looking to the wreckage.

At forest's edge, Young Masbath waits.

Ichabod circles the tower. With a sigh, he rides to join Young Masbath. They head into the woods.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS -- DAY

Dark, dense and creepy. Ichabod and Young Masbath move through. Young Masbath halts his horse and looks around.

ICHABOD
What is it?

YOUNG MASBATH
Listen.

ICHABOD
(listens, looks)
I hear nothing.

YOUNG MASBATH
No crickets or cicadas calling. No bird songs.

Stark quiet. Ichabod notes this unhappily.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS -- LATER DAY

Ichabod's hand drops the needle/straw in the water bowl. The needle spins. The bowl is turned to match notches.

Ichabod points the way to Young Masbath.

ELSEWHERE, SOMEONE WATCHES: A MOVING P.O.V. WATCHES them as they ride. FOLLOWS.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, FURTHER ON -- LATER DAY

Ichabod and Masbath reach a hill crest. They stop, uneasy. Below: a CAVE with a rock archway. An ill-fitting door covers the mouth. The chimney spews smoke.

ICHABOD
We have apparently arrived.

EXT. CAVE HOME -- DAY

The horses are tied to a tree. Ichabod walks to the cave door. Unsure, he hesitantly knocks.

INT. CAVE HOME -- DAY

Ichabod and Young Masbath step in.

Walls are hung with skins and skeletons, dry flowers and reed grass in patterns. An OLD CRONE sits facing away.

The Old Crone, a mountain woman with matted hair and grey features, sits disinterested. Ichabod edges closer.

ICHABOD
Pardon. You did not answer when I knocked. Are we intruding?

OLD CRONE
You are from the Hollow?

ICHABOD
In a way, yes.

Ichabod looks at tables of gourd bowls of dead insects and acorns. Knifes, scissors, yellow bones. He takes the Lenape's piece of reed grass from his pocket.

ICHABOD
The Lenape who lived in these woods...do you know him? The Redman?
(MORE)

ICHABOD (cont'd)
(uncomfortable wait)
I should tell you... he has been murdered.

OLD CRONE
Leave me. You are not welcome here.

The Old Crone places something on a table beside her -- a dead cardinal, bright red.

Ichabod is afraid, backing away, but Young Masbath takes the woven piece and steps to the Crone.

YOUNG MASBATH
Were you a friend to the Indian?
(waits)
You should have this... if you were his friend.

Young Masbath puts the woven piece beside the cardinal. He walks to join Ichabod in leaving.

OLD CRONE
You seek remedy against the Horseman?

The Old Crone reaches to pick up the weaving. She stands, faces them. Tall. Ichabod nods.

OLD CRONE
(to Young Masbath)
Go out and keep away, child.
(to Ichabod)
You stay. Follow with me.

The Old Crone takes a candle and walks, deep into the cave.

INT. CAVE HOME, LOWER CAVE -- DAY

The Old Crone comes through a passage in the wet walls. Ichabod enters, scared, bent under low ceiling.

OLD CRONE
I hear him. He rides to the Hollow and back.

ICHABOD
The Horseman. Yes.

OLD CRONE
Sit.

Ichabod sits on crooked stool. The Old Crone kneels with her back to him, gathers straw in a pile on the floor.

ICHABOD
Can you help?

OLD CRONE
You want to see into the nether world... I can show you. Whatever you see, do not move or speak. I will hold him.

She gathers bowls, putting grass and powder on the pile.

ICHABOD
What... what are you doing?

OLD CRONE
(turns, furious)
Close your mouth! Keep silent.

She takes two jars from a table, pours ashes on the pile from one. She shakes the other roughly, takes the lid off and upends it. A baby bat squirms on the floor, dazed.

The Old Crone holds the bat, using a knife to cut off its head. She soaks the straw with blood, SPEAKING IN TONGUES, guttural. Using a wick, she lights the straw.

She grasps two METAL CUFFS with chains attached, slides these onto her bony wrists, then bends to inhale smoke.

OLD CRONE
He comes now.

Ichabod would like to leave now.

EXT. CAVE HOME -- DAY

Young Masbath, waiting by the horses, looks up. Through the trees, black clouds billow and block the sun.

INT. CAVE HOME, LOWER CAVE -- DAY

The Old Crone slumps, still with her back to Ichabod. She does not move. Wind howls through a hole/window. Rain.

Candles blow out. Ichabod stands, worried.

ICHABOD
Excuse me... um...

She remains motionless. The STORM outside intensifies.

WE SEE the skin of the Crone's wrists transform; swelling in the cuffs, hardening, cracking and bleeding.

(CONTINUED)

Something Ichabod cannot see. He inches closer.

ICHABOD
Are you alright... ?

The Crone turns, hideous, leaping erect -- a half-human, half-demon CREATURE. Its black clawed hands reaching.

Ichabod recoils, crying out.

Chains on restraining cuffs yank the creature back.

Ichabod hits the floor, knocking over a table of bones. The creature is chained, but still wants Ichabod. It SCREECHES.

The Old Crone's face seethes from transformation, eyes blood red, nostrils dripping, teeth now jagged.

CREATURE/OLD CRONE
You seek the warrior bathed in blood... the Headless Horseman.

Ichabod slides back as far as possible while the creature claws the rock floor, yearning.

CREATURE/OLD CRONE
Follow the Indian trail to where the sun dies. Follow to the tree of the dead.

The creature pulls, testing the chains. Behind, the BOLT holding the chains to the wall slips. The wall cracks.

CREATURE/OLD CRONE
Climb down to the Horseman's soulless place and let loose his silent shrieking. Do you hear? Do you hear?!

Ichabod nods, quaking, aghast. He glances to the exit.

The chain bolt gives more... coming loose...

CREATURE/OLD CRONE
He who holds fast the Horseman's desire will guide his reaping hand. Catch hold of his desire.

Ichabod bolts for the door. The creature HOWLS, leaping...

The chain bolt breaks...

Ichabod cries out, tackled to the floor...

It is the Old Crone who landed on him. She has returned to human form, semi-consious. Ichabod shoves her off.

EXT. CAVE HOME -- DAY

Ichabod runs out into the howling storm, past Masbath.

ICHABOD
We are leaving.

YOUNG MASBATH
What happened?

Ichabod scrambles onto Gunpowder, heading further into the woods, glancing back. Young Masbath follows.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, FURTHER ON -- EARLY EVENING

No rain. Dark. A lantern's glow creates shifting shadows as Ichabod and Young Masbath ride.

YOUNG MASBATH
Follow the Indian trail to where the sun dies. To the tree of the dead.
(looking back)
Maybe we passed it by.

ICHABOD
How could something named "the tree of the dead" fail to draw attention?

A BIRD CRIES OUT. Ichabod's startled, looking up. The BIRD is HEARD ALIGHTING. Leaves float downwards.

ICHABOD
We should not go much further in this murk.

YOUNG MASBATH
Should we go back?

ICHABOD
We are far from the Hollow.
(dismounts, troubled)
Loath to say it... better to get our backs against a tree and stay till morning.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS (TIME CUT) -- NIGHT

Horses are tied. Ichabod is seated against a tree. A campfire burns. Young Masbath lies on a blanket, rifle cross his chest, staring to treetops.

Leaves and branches shift in the wind. Bats fly wildly.

YOUNG MASBATH
What does it mean... climb down to the Horseman's soulless place?

ICHABOD
"Let loose his silent shrieking." Who knows, till we work at it? I admit not being anxious to find out.
(pause)
"He who holds the Horseman's desire will guide his reaping hand." Whatever the Horseman's desire is, other than extinguishing lives.

A SNAPPING BRANCH. Ichabod raises his pistol.

ICHABOD
(to Young Masbath)
Do not move.

Ichabod rises. He creeps forward, pistol and lantern forward. Foliage is thick. CRUNCHING LEAVES are HEARD.

Ichabod crouches, puts down the lantern and picks up a branch. He tosses the branch to the foliage...

SOME ANIMAL darts away, a running blur.

Ichabod rises, following with his pistol.

ANOTHER ANGLE, MOVING P.O.V.: low to the ground, moving swiftly at Ichabod...

Ichabod spins, blindsided.

Young Masbath fires his rifle -- CRACK!!

The ANIMAL is KNOCKED DOWN mid-leap, yelping...

The beast lands, a mass of grey fur.

Ichabod comes to stare down. Young Masbath arrives. They both look to the beast, horrified.

The creature lies helplessly spastic; a TWO-HEADED WOLF, with one head blown open to brain and gore. It's living head lifts, MEWING sadly, eyes pleading.

Ichabod step up with pistol. FIRES. MEWING STOPS.

ICHABOD
What God-forsaken hell is this?

Ichabod swallows back sickness, looking away. Something catches his eye.

ICHABOD
Christ...

Through the forest: the SKY'S LIT UP. Distant fire.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, CAVE HOME -- EARLY EVENING

Ichabod and Masbath ride up, confronted by the Crone's cave vomiting flame out all orifices.

Ichabod approaches. Embers swirl everywhere. The Old Crone's body lies amongst bloodied leaves. Headless.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE, DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE -- NIGHT

Much commotion. A MOB in front of the home marked "LANCASTER, PHYSICIAN." Steenwyck addresses the rabble.

FATHER STEENWYCK
You all stand idle, while this man goes about with a book of secrets and a bag filled with magic. You all stand idle, while the shadow of the Devil falls over our town.

Baltus, Lady Van Tassel and Katrina watch at safe distance.

FATHER STEENWYCK
I say, if you do nothing, you share in the blasphemy of Ichabod Crane!

Killian, on horseback beside his wife, BETH, and son, Thomas, rides to one side of the shouting crowd.

KILLIAN
Listen to me! Do you want to save your crops? Or would you rather see your farms go to ruin?

FATHER STEENWYCK
How is he saving our farms? How? Ichabod Crane has brought into our midst the soulless, moldering corpse of a heretic!

INT. DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, MEDICAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod examines the Crone's neck wound with magnification spectacles. Young Masbath is seated, ledger in his lap.

(CONTINUED)

ICHABOD
The wound is neither smooth nor cauterized, but jagged. She bleed like a fountain.

Ichabod lifts her dead hand to show bruises and cuts.

ICHABOD
She did not go quietly.

INT. DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, PARLOR -- NIGHT

Doctor Lancaster wrings his hands. His WIFE rocks nervously in a rocking chair. The CROWD outside ROARS as a bonfire lights up the curtained windows.

The front door is POUNDED open. ANGRY MEN enter. Lancaster stands, lips quivering. He points insistently to a door.

INT. DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, MEDICAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Angry men break in. Ichabod looks up.

ANGRY MAN
Step aside, Constable. Step aside!

Ichabod is shoved aside, spectacles knocked off.

The group grasps the Crone. Masbath stands on his chair, clutching the ledger. Ichabod grabs one man.

ICHABOD
What are you doing?

The man slams Ichabod back.

Magnification spectacles are crushed under foot.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- NIGHT

Angry men carry the corpse to a raging bonfire. The mob makes way. Steenwyck cheers them.

FATHER STEENWYCK
Let her burn! Let her burn!

Ichabod comes out, followed by Young Masbath. The Crone's corpse is thrown in the fire. Cheers all around.

At Ichabod's side, a man tries to grab the ledger Young Masbath holds. Young Masbath cries out, hanging on to the book. Ichabod joins the struggle.

(CONTINUED)

Katrina watches, emotions conflicting.

Other men grab Ichabod. One punches Ichabod in the face.

Katrina rides forward as Baltus calls for her to stop.

Katrina leaps down, into the crowd, pulls men off Ichabod.

KATRINA
Stop this! Leave them alone!

A SHOT RINGS OUT. Chaos halts. Everyone turns, quieting.

The men around Masbath and Ichabod turn to face Brom Bones. Brom holds a smoking pistol, flanked by Theodore and Glenn.

BROM
Let them go.
(pointing)
Are you going to beat an orphaned child, imbecile?

Masbath is released, along with the ledger. Steenwyck moves forward, pushing people aside.

FATHER STEENWYCK
Are you Ichabod Crane's protector, Brom Bones?

BROM
Only for the moment.

FATHER STEENWYCK
You side with him in this?

BROM
No. I agree he has only made matters worse. But, that will change, if you listen.

He trades with Theodore, pistol for a long rifle. Brom hefts the rifle, taking a round slug from his pocket.

BROM
Theodore, Glenn and I offer to ride each day and night to watch over the Hollow. We will stalk the border of the Western Woods and haunt the Horseman for a change, with rifles like this... and slugs like this...

Brom brings the slug to his lips, blows. It WHISTLES.

BROM
Hollowed out and filled with powder.

Brom smiles at Katrina, who watches unimpressed.

BROM
Constable Crane is not the only one who fights with science on his side.

ICHABOD
I fired upon the Horseman and the bullet did nothing.

BROM
You must have missed your mark.

ICHABOD
I hit him square.

BROM
(to the crowd)
I say... if the Horseman is solid enough to take the lives of our people, he's solid enough to feel this...

Brom aims the rifle at a BARREL down the road. FIRES.

PLUNK -- the barrel is hit -- EXPLODES. Smoke wafts.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

In bed, Ichabod is having unpleasant dreams once more.

FREAKISH WOMAN (v.o.)
The night of the great storm, I saw her cross my windows.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- COURTROOM -- DAY

Young Ichabod is seated beside Father, eyes tearful. We are back in the court where Mother stands trial.

FREAKISH WOMAN
In the lightning, I did see her.
(points to Mother)
Her. Lady Crane... I will never forget it. The next moment, I found my infant son was dead, with the blood welt on his breast.

The evil Third Man turns to a jury of TWELVE MEN.

THIRD MAN
You have heard it. The blood welt is the mark of Satan's touch.

As the crowd murmurs in fear, Young Ichabod looks to Father, who sits with hands clenched, emotionless.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S HOME -- NIGHT

In the quiet kitchen, Young Ichabod looks across the table. Father stares into his food.

YOUNG ICHABOD
She was with me, father.

FATHER
Nothing can be done against them.

YOUNG ICHABOD
She was with me that night.

Father doesn't even look up.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- CHURCH -- NIGHT

Empty church. Young Ichabod carries a lantern past pews. A soldier is seated near the altar with a rifle.

YOUNG ICHABOD
May I see her?

The soldier exits through a white door. Young Ichabod waits, looking up at the vast church. The white door opens and the Third Man steps out.

THIRD MAN
Go home.

YOUNG ICHABOD
May I see my mother?

THIRD MAN
You do not want to be here. Go home to your father.

YOUNG ICHABOD
She did not do it... please listen...

THIRD MAN
She is guilty.

YOUNG ICHABOD
No, sir, please... she is innocent...

THIRD MAN
She has confessed.

YOUNG ICHABOD
No.

(CONTINUED)

THIRD MAN
She has admitted to her evil and signed a written confession. Do you know what confession is?
(off Ichabod's nod)
All that is left for you now is to pray for her soul.

The Third Man leaves through the white door.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Young Ichabod buttons his shirt.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S YARD -- MORNING

Young Ichabod comes out, looks to the lawn, not understanding. Father loads a wagon full of belongings.

FATHER
We are leaving.
(long pause)
She has gone away.

Realization comes to Young Ichabod. He runs, away across the lawn as Father calls after him.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- FOREST TRAIL -- MORNING

Young Ichabod runs, weeping.

THIRD MAN (V.O.)
She has confessed.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- CHURCH -- MORNING

Empty. Doors are thrown open and Young Ichabod enters. He goes down the aisle, towards the white door.

THIRD MAN (V.O.)
She has admitted to her evil and signed a written confession.

YOUNG ICHABOD
Mother.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- CHURCH, BEYOND WHITE DOOR -- MORNING

Young Ichabod enters, halting. The room contains TORTURE DEVICES: iron cuffs, thumb screws, knifes and needles.

THIRD MAN (V.O.)
Do you know what confession is?

He walks, numb, eyes locked forward...

In the corner is a SPIKED CHAIR, adorned with sharp iron spikes. Hundreds of spikes. It is fitted with straps for holding down the "accused."

Tears stream down Young Ichabod's face. He kneels, hands on the spikes of the chair, pressing hard.

As he sobs, blood runs down from his hands.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

In bed, Ichabod opens tear filled eyes. He sits up, bringing his trembling hands to wipe his cheeks. His hands trail blood. He looks to them...

The old scars are bleeding.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Katrina comes to the door. Ichabod is seated by the fire, eyes bleary, palms wrapped with bloodied cloth.

KATRINA
Constable Crane?

Katrina comes beside Ichabod's chair.

ICHABOD
Allow me some time. I have spent every hour in the company of others. I need to be alone.

KATRINA
What troubles you?

She moves in front. Ichabod gets up and crosses to sit facing away. Katrina takes the chair he deserted.

KATRINA
The things I said to you before... I was wrong to say them.

ICHABOD
No, actually, you were not. Every word you spoke had truth in it.

KATRINA
What has happened?

Ichabod sits silent, puts his head back, eyes closed.

ICHABOD
Lady Van Tassel... she is your stepmother, isn't she? She bears so little resemblance.

KATRINA
What?

ICHABOD
She is not your birth mother, is she?

KATRINA
No, but... why do you ask that?

ICHABOD
What happened to your mother? Is she still alive?

KATRINA
She died. Her lungs were diseased... two years ago. What is this about?

ICHABOD
Memories have come back. I had them forgotten, and wish I could forget them again... but they are here now.
(pause)
Lord, how I hate this place.

KATRINA
If you want me to go, I will. Do you want me to leave?

ICHABOD
I... I do not know. I no longer know what I think or what I feel.

Katrina walks to him. She touches his back.

KATRINA
Why are you so afraid of that? Is there truly such harm in uncertainty?

She kneels, smiles a little for him. She reaches to touch his face, holds his head in her hands. Leans to kiss him.

He rests his head against hers, weary, putting his arms around her. They kiss passionately.

EXT. THE HOLLOW -- EARLY MORNING

Dawn light is visible over forests pounded by rain.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALL -- MORNING

Ichabod exits his room, satchel in hand. He looks down the hall, then steps back in to take a white rose from a vase.

AROUND A CORNER, Ichabod comes to the last door. He bends, slipping the white rose under the crack of the door.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FRONT PORCH -- MORNING

Rain. Ichabod comes out. Across the lawn, Young Masbath is bringing the horses.

LADY VAN TASSEL (O.S.)
Good morrow, Constable.

Ichabod turns to see Lady Van Tassel in a chair, sewing.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Returning to the Western Woods?

ICHABOD
Yes, actually.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Use caution.

ICHABOD
(nods, studies her)
Do you know... I think those are the first words I have heard from you my entire time here.

LADY VAN TASSEL
As my husband says, a wife should be always like an echo, and at the same time, quite unlike an echo.
(off Ichabod's confusion)
Like an echo, she should speak only when spoken to, and unlike an echo, should never try to have the last word. Or, at least that is what he believes.

Baltus comes out the door, irritable, skillet in hand.

BALTUS
Constable... did you notice anything out of the ordinary during the night?

Ichabod eyes the skillet, ill at ease, trying not to be.

ICHABOD
Um... I... I did not... no. Why?

BALTUS
Sarah has gone missing... my servant girl. Her things are gone. Damn it. She has joined the migration out of town.
(to Lady Van Tassel)
What about breakfast, woman? Or, am I to starve to death?

Lady Van Tassel gets up and goes in, taking the skillet.

ICHABOD
I should be going... good day to you.

Ichabod heads towards Young Masbath. Baltus watches from the porch, disgruntled. He goes in.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS -- DAY

Heavy rain. Ichabod and Young Masbath ride side by side.

YOUNG MASBATH
If the Crone's wound bled hard, that means she was not killed by the Hessian. Someone only tried to make it look that way.

ICHABOD
You grow sharper by the minute, little man. It boggles my mind, but I begin to prefer your company over all others.

YOUNG MASBATH
Well... I'm one of the few people who likes you.

ICHABOD
(laughs)
True enough.

YOUNG MASBATH
Then, who murdered the Old Crone? And why?

ICHABOD
Good questions, deserving answers, of which we are in short supply.

A SOUND is HEARD. Ichabod looks back, then to Masbath.

ICHABOD
Quicken pace.

Ichabod rides faster. Young Masbath keeps up.

FURTHER ON, they charge over a hill. Ichabod halts Gunpowder and climbs clumsily off.

ICHABOD
Ride on.

Young Masbath obeys. Ichabod takes out his pistol and wades into forest growth, backtracking.

INSIDE THE FOREST, Ichabod bounds through underbrush, low. A HORSE is HEARD SNORTING. He pushes through branches...

Moving behind a FIGURE IN A GREY CLOAK on horseback.

ICHABOD
Halt and turn. I have a pistol aimed at your head.

The figure stops, pushes off the cloak hood. Katrina.

KATRINA
It is only me.

ICHABOD
Katrina. Why do you follow?

KATRINA
I apologize if I worried you.

ICHABOD
A woman should not be out alone in these woods.

KATRINA
But, I am not alone, am I? I only wished to see what you were up to, and...
(takes out WHITE ROSE)
To thank you.

Ichabod softens, but doesn't want to.

ICHABOD
Come along.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, TREE OF THE DEAD -- DAY

Raining still. Ichabod, Masbath and Katrina come into a clearing, mouths falling open at the sight of...

A monstrously huge TREE OF THE DEAD, at the clearing's center, with branches reaching far and wide, knotted and gross, like agony captured in wood sculpture.

(CONTINUED)

Ichabod dismounts, crossing a line beyond which grass and weeds will not grow. Young Masbath and Katrina dismount.

YOUNG MASBATH
You were right... it does draw attention to itself.

Ichabod stares up into the endless, dead canopy of branches. He circles the incredibly wide trunk.

There's a VERTICAL WOUND in the bark, as if the tree once had a terrible vertical in it, now partially healed and disgustingly scarred. Ichabod approaches.

He feels the mushy scar, picking at its scabs till much sap begins to trickle. It is red and Ichabod fingers it.

ICHABOD
Blood.

KATRINA
What did you say?

Ichabod goes to where Katrina and Masbath wait with the horses, digs in a saddle bag for a hand axe.

YOUNG MASBATH
What is it?

ICHABOD
Stay back.

At the trunk, Ichabod thumps the flat end of the axe against the suture. It sounds hollow. Ichabod begins to chop.

He pulls away loose bark. The tree drips more blood and a clear goo. Ichabod uses both hands on the axe to hack at the festering suture.

KATRINA
What are you doing?

ICHABOD
Just... keep where you are.

Ignoring, Young Masbath moves closer. Ichabod keeps chopping, then grips a large, loose flap of wood, trying to bend it. It's not easy. Ichabod struggles.

Katrina follows Masbath's slow advance.

Ichabod's pulling... the flap suddenly gives, revealing a blood-soaked, wide-eyed, gap-mouthed HUMAN HEAD.

Ichabod recoils. Behind him, Katrina stifles a scream, taking Young Masbath in her arms to keep him from looking.

(CONTINUED)

It is Philipse's head, hanging off the trunk flap, held by roots grown around and into the flesh.

Ichabod reapproaches, back of his hand to his mouth.

FOUR other SEVERED, DECAYING HEADS are held by ingrown roots within the dewy innards.

KATRINA
My God... what has happened?

ICHABOD
He... he tries to take the heads... they will not pass.

He looks to the branches towering above.

ICHABOD
Must be some sort of gateway. But, why this place... ?

YOUNG MASBATH
We should go.

ICHABOD
Why this tree?

Ichabod begins looking at the ground, moving around the tree. He gets to his knees, pushing mud away.

Uncovering a flush HEADSTONE carved with "666."

ICHABOD
(to himself)
"Climb down to the Horseman's soulless place."
(to Masbath)
Bring the shovel.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, TREE OF THE DEAD -- LATER DAY

Rain. Young Masbath's crouched, muddy, rifle across his knees. He's watching the tree.

Behind him, Katrina climbs out of the shallow grave near a pile of mud. Ichabod hands up the shovel.

KATRINA
Masbath, we've found it.

Young Masbath goes to the grave. Ichabod pulls at thick burlap cloth, straining as it comes away.

Ichabod looks down, disbelieving.

ICHABOD
It cannot be true.

WE SEE: roots have gripped the Horseman's bones and tattered uniform. The skeleton is all there -- except the skull.

ICHABOD
Why is it every grave I open holds a new mystery inside?

KATRINA
The skull is gone.

ICHABOD
Yes. I did notice that, thank you.

Ichabod climbs out, weary in body and spirit. LIGHTNING. THUNDER. He stares at the bones.

ICHABOD
This is his silent shrieking... and his desire, to reclaim his head.

Ichabod turns, looking to the bordering forest.

ICHABOD
"He who holds fast the Horseman's desire will guide his reaping hand."
(pause)
Someone controls the Horseman.

KATRINA (o.s.)
Ichabod!

Ichabod turns, looks...

Katrina and Young Masbath back away, because the ROOTS in the grave are ALIVE, further entwining around remains.

Ichabod spins to the twisted tree...

The vertical SUTURE SEETHES, pulling inwards... sucking Philipse's head back in and closing, bubbling.

Ichabod bounds over grave dirt pile, hastening Katrina and Young Masbath along as he flees.

At the tree, the suture swells.

Ichabod, Katrina and Young Masbath pass where their freaking horses are tied to a fallen trunk, heading for cover.

A RUMBLING is HEARD from the twisted tree, which suddenly BURSTS wide, spitting smoldering cinders.

At the tree line, Ichabod, Katrina and Young Masbath cower, looking back.

From the tree wound, a glow brightens, till the Headless Horseman and Daredevil EXPLODE into existence...

They hit the ground running.

Ichabod watches the Horseman ride away with bolts of LIGHTNING STRIKING the GROUND BEHIND.

The Horseman disappears in the forest.

ICHABOD
His next victim is chosen!
(to Masbath)
Give me distance, then guide her back to the Hollow.

Ichabod runs towards the horses.

YOUNG MASBATH
Constable!

EXT. WESTERN WOODS -- DAY

The Horseman rips past on Daredevil.

EXT. BEHIND IN WESTERN WOODS -- DAY

Ichabod rides as fast as Gunpowder is able.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- DAY

Small home. Killian, Thomas and Beth have finished supper. Beth clears plates as Killian picks his teeth with a knife.

THOMAS
May I be excused, father?

KILLIAN
Do you deserve to be?

THIRD MAN
(shyly)
I think so.

KILLIAN
(smiles)
Then, go.

Thomas gets down from his chair. He goes to the fireplace to light a tallow wick, which he takes to the next room.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- DAY

Thomas plops on the floor and lights his MAGIC LANTERN: a lantern with an outer sleeve of glass painted with silhouettes of lions and monsters.

Thomas turns the lantern and looks to the walls where the creatures' shadows are thrown. He roars for them, imagining them real and having a grand time.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- DAY

Beth comes for more dishes.

BETH
Don't pick teeth. You teach Thomas bad habits.

Killian pulls her to him, playful.

KILLIAN
I am a bad habit. There's nothing for it.

BETH
(kisses him)
No one knows better than I.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- DAY

Thomas continues his fun, shadow animals circling him.

In the shifting light, a baby spider comes from a crack in the wall. Then, another spider skitters out. More follow.

EXT. FORESTS -- DAY

A black horse runs, hooves pounding the ground. THUNDER is HEARD. The horse slows and stops... it is Brom's horse, with Brom aboard. Brom looks skyward.

The storm harshens, roaring through the trees. Distant HOOFBEATS can be HEARD. POUNDING.

Brom takes his rifle off his shoulder. The HOOFBEATS grow LOUDER and PASS, far away. Brom turns in the saddle and WHISTLES. He kicks his horse and rides.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- DAY

Thomas still watches shadow beasts, but sees something else. He goes to the crack where hundreds of spiders flee all directions. Thomas is amused.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- DAY

Behind Killian, mantelpiece stones pulse, breathing almost imperceptibly. Demonic faces form, then disappear and reform again, shifting. WIND HOWLS.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- DAY

Beth enters, looking at Thomas.

BETH
What are you doing there?

The magic lantern stops spinning. Shadow creatures freeze.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- DAY

The ENTIRE HOUSE CREAKS. Killian looks up. CREAKING STOPS. The HOWLING WIND is LOUD.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, THE WHITE ROOM -- DAY

Beth comes to Thomas' side as he points.

THOMAS
Spiders.

Beth bends to see the swarming spiders. She looks up, noticing the FEROCITY of the WIND.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- DAY

Killian stands, looking up. The HOUSE CREAKS again, then suddenly the WIND CEASES. Silence.

KILLIAN
Beth...

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, THE WHITE ROOM -- DAY

Beth picks up Thomas. The magic lantern creatures begin spinning anew, all around.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- DAY

With a ROAR, the fire flares. Killian looks.

WHHOOOSH -- the fire shoots up the fireplace. Gone.

(CONTINUED)

Behind Killian, the DOOR SPLINTERS INWARDS. The Horseman steps in, a battle axe in each hand. WIND BLASTS...

The DOOR to the other room SLAMS.

Killian grabs a kitchen chair and hurls it at the Horseman. The Horseman swings, smashing it aside.

KILLIAN
Beth... run!

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- DAY

Beth hugs Thomas to her as she backs away.

KILLIAN (o.s.)
(from kitchen)
Get out!

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- DAY

Killian grabs an iron skewer from the fireplace, swings it to fend off a blow from the Horseman.

The Horseman swings the other axe. Killian ducks. The axe cracks fireplace stone, throwing sparks.

Killian lunges, jamming the skewer into the Horseman.

The skewer comes through the Horseman's back. The Horseman swipes with the flat of one axe -- pounding Killian aside.

Killian hits the wall, bashing his head. Hits the floor.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- DAY

Beth kicks a carpet to reveal a trap door.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- DAY

The Horseman pulls the skewer out of his body, throws it. He goes to lift Killian by the hair with one hand, brings back the axe in the other...

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- DAY

At the trap door, Beth lowers Thomas to stairs leading to the cellar. Thomas is crying.

BETH
Don't let him get you.

THOMAS
Mommy...

BETH
You hide now... go...

Beth closes the trap door, frantically replacing the carpet. The room's door flies open and the Horseman strides in, carrying Killian's severed head. Beth shrieks.

The Horseman steps forward, knocks over the magic lantern.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, CELLAR -- DAY

Beth's SCREAMS are abruptly CUT OFF. Her BODY is HEARD HITTING the floor above. Thomas crosses the cellar, stumbles. He scurries into the shelter of a wheelbarrow propped against the wall. FOOTSTEPS are HEARD.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, THE WHITE ROOM -- DAY

The Horseman's hands place Killian's and Beth's heads in a sack, cinching the sack shut.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- DAY

The Headless Horseman enters, bends to retrieve the battle axe he left. He stands. Pause.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, CELLAR -- DAY

Thomas' trembling hands pull the wheelbarrow closer. QUIET. He tries to control his sobbing.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- DAY

The Horseman turns, falls to his knees. He starts to chop at the floor with both axes. CHOPping, CHOPping, CHOPping... making quick work of it...

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, CELLAR -- DAY

A hole appears in the ceiling as debris falls.

Thomas looks up, terrified. He gets up to run away...

The Horseman's arm shoves through above, grasping Thomas and yanking him up.

EXT. KILLIAN'S FARM -- DAY

Brom rides from the forest, charging across Killian's field.

At Killian's house, Daredevil rides up as the Headless Horseman walks out with his sack of heads. The Horseman ties the sack to the saddle and leaps up.

Brom puts his reins in his mouth, raising his rifle.

The Horseman heads away, past the barn, as Brom gains.

Brom aims... FIRES!

BOOM -- the slug EXPLODES, blowing the Horseman off Daredevil. Daredevil keeps going. The Horseman's smoldering body is left "face down."

Brom halts his horse. He climbs down, pleased.

The Horseman moves.

Brom backs away, satisfaction diminishing.

The Horseman gets on his knees.

Brom falls to one knee, begins reloading. He fills the gun from his powder horn.

The Horseman stands, unsheathes his sword and turns. The blast has blow apart his uniform at the chest and shoulder, exposing rotten flesh and maggot-infested muscle.

Brom readies his ramrod, jamming powder in the barrel.

The Horseman charges.

Brom stands, pulling out the ramrod. The Horseman is on him. Brom swings the rifle, blocking. Sparks fly.

The battle is on, with Brom fending off the Horseman's sword with the gun - CLANK - CLANK - CLANK.

ACROSS THE FIELD, Ichabod and Gunpowder break into the open.

UP THE FIELD, the Horseman makes a backhanded swing. Brom goes down, his rifle sent flying.

Brom rolls to avoid as the Horseman slashes.

Brom flees. The Horseman pulls and throws a knife...

THWAP -- the knife imbeds in Brom's thigh.

The Horseman runs towards Brom.

(CONTINUED)

Ichabod closes in, pulling an unlit lantern off his saddle.

Brom tries to get up, bends to extract the knife.

The Horseman, mid-run, changes his sword grip, blade down.

He plants one foot on Brom's back, raising his sword, about to skewer...

Ichabod arrives full gallop, SMASHES the lantern into the Horseman -- knocking the Horseman off Brom.

AT THE EDGE OF THE FOREST, Theodore and Glen arrive on horseback. They hold a moment, watching.

Brom runs, limping, to the barn, goal in sight: farm implements propped there. Brom grabs SCYTHES with long curved blades, one in per hand.

The Horseman rises.

Ichabod turns Gunpowder and leaps off, runs to Brom.

The Horseman moves towards them, hefting a battle axe in his free hand. Ichabod steps up, pistol aimed, furious.

ICHABOD
For what it's worth...

FIRES -- the bullet rips through the Horseman's stomach to reveal putrid innards as he keeps advancing.

At the forest, Theodore looks to Glenn, turns and flees.

Brom steps up, scythes ready. He and the Horseman go at it. Brom blocks axe and sword, catching and deflecting blows.

At the forest, Glenn follows Theodore away.

Ichabod grabs a long handled SICKLE.

Brom swings the scythes. The Horseman avoids.

Ichabod moves to the side, looking for an opening. He swings the sickle. The Horseman blocks.

The Horseman battles both at once, catching blows... countering every strike, METAL RINGING.

Brom catches the Horseman's sword in one scythe, holding it off. Catches the axe handle in the other scythe.

The Horseman flatfoot KICKS Brom's chest, sending him down.

Ichabod swings the sickle blade...

Hits the Horseman, the blade embedding to the hilt.

The Horseman drops his axe and grasps the sickle, jerking...

The sickle handle SLAMS Ichabod's, knocking him away.

Ichabod crawls, tries to shake off the blow.

He looks up. The Horseman staggers, spastically trying to pull the blade from his body.

Brom limps to Ichabod, yanks him to his feet.

BROM
We cannot win this.

They head towards the forest.

Behind, the Horseman extracts the sickle, throws it. He strides after them, picks up his axe on the way.

EXT. RIVERBANK -- DAY

Ichabod and Brom stumble down a hillside. Brom points.

BROM
There... !

They run to a DOCK at the edge of a wide, rapid river. They jump into a FLAT BOAT barge.

BROM
Go to the front and guide it.

Ichabod goes. Brom uses a scythe to slash the ropes.

Ichabod picks up a GUIDE POLE. The barge lurches, set free.

Ichabod struggles to push the boat out. It moves swiftly, caught in rain swollen current.

Brom looks back. No Horseman. He leaves the scythe and moves to the front, hefting another pole to help guide.

BROM
Let's see him catch us now.

Ichabod looks to the shore. Horror.

ICHABOD
Look.

LIGHTNING ILLUMINATES -- ahead, the Horseman stands on the bank with axe and sword. Daredevil near.

(CONTINUED)

BROM
We'll pass right by the son of a bitch.

Ichabod and Brom push with the poles, trying for speed.

At the bank, the Horseman walks directly to the water...

Just as he takes a step onto the water, the rain churned surface TRANSFORMS -- instantly BECOMING a SHEET of ICE...

SPREADING and supporting the Horseman as he advances.

ICE SHOOTS OUT ahead of him, towards a point in the river where it will intercept the barge.

BROM
My Christ...

The Horseman's ICE BRIDGE engulfs the barge, HALTING IT.

Ichabod and Brom are thrown. The barge is trapped.

The Horseman nears.

Brom runs to the rear to retrieve his scythe. Ichabod holds up the only weapon he has, his guide pole.

The Horseman steps on board. Ichabod swings. The Horseman's axe cracks the pole in half...

The Horseman thrusts with sword -- into Ichabod's chest -- clean through. It SIZZLES as Ichabod screams.

The Horseman lifts Ichabod up, flips him, pulling the sword out as Ichabod goes...

SMASHING through the ice and under.

UNDERWATER: water carries Ichabod, slams him against ice above. He's pulled down by undertow.

ABOVE WATER, beyond the edge of the ice bridge: Ichabod comes up, gasping, chocking on rain.

He treads water, looking to the barge.

ICHABOD'S P.O.V. -- FROM THE WATER

Aboard the barge, the Horseman cuts Brom down... stands over him, chopping with sword. Our VIEW grows BLURRY, and...

FADES OUT/IN

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Candlelight. Ichabod, shirtless, feverish, opens his eyes. The wound at the top of his chest is raw. Katrina inserts a needle in the skin around it.

KATRINA
Lay still, Ichabod. Do not move.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Doctor, he is awake.

Ichabod tries to sit. Pain stops him. Lady Van Tassel helps bleed the wound with the needle and a tube leading to a SUCTION JAR of blood.

ICHABOD
(barely a voice)
What... what are you doing... ?

KATRINA
I'm drawing bad blood from the wound.

Doctor Lancaster comes to the bed.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
Keep still, Constable. You were half-drowned when they found you.

ICHABOD
... Brom Bones...

DOCTOR LANCASTER
He is dead. You would be also, if your wound had not somehow shut.

ICHABOD
Bring Young Masbath here.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
You need to sleep.

ICHABOD
Bring him.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
You need rest.

Ichabod gives up, closes his eyes. Katrina, needle in one hand, brings her other hand to hold Ichabod's.

Blood drips into the suction jar.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- LATER NIGHT

Ichabod is soundly asleep. Across the room, Katrina is at his work table. Ichabod stirs. Katrina looks to him.

Once she is satisfied he will not wake, she returns to what she was doing, turning a page. She is reading his ledger.

EXT. SERVANT'S QUARTER'S, MASBATH'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Young Masbath lies awake. A glint of light crosses the window. Masbath looks to it, gets up, peers out.

THROUGH THE WINDOW, he can see the Van Tassel Manor House in the distance. Lantern LIGHT crosses the lawn.

EXT. VAN TASSEL ESTATE, ORCHARD -- NIGHT

The lantern light moves through the orchard, away from the house. We cannot make out the person.

Elsewhere, Young Masbath runs in pursuit. He hides against one tree, leans to look...

The light enters forest. Young Masbath follows.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- MORNING

Ichabod's hurting. Masbath helps with a shirt.

YOUNG MASBATH
Someone left last night. Looked like they headed to the square, but I lost them in the forest.

ICHABOD
Man or woman?

YOUNG MASBATH
All I saw was their lantern.

ICHABOD
Business best hidden is hidden best at night.

Ichabod goes to his work table, organizing his satchel.

YOUNG MASBATH
If someone has the Horseman's skull... if they control the Horseman, then why haven't they sent him for your head yet?

(CONTINUED)

ICHABOD
Because, I serve a fine purpose alive. It is perfection for our murderer if I return to New York City with nothing more than tales of a galloping ghoul.
(pause)
We must uncover the reason these victims were targeted. What was taken from them... other than their lives? Who benefits by their deaths?

Ichabod fumbles the bottle of white powder.

It bounces, cork popping out... rolls under the bed.

ICHABOD
Damn it.

Ichabod kneels, pained. A trail of the blood-detecting powder has spilled. The bottle is out of reach.

YOUNG MASBATH
I'll get it.

Young Masbath gets down, ready to crawl for it, but Ichabod stops him, peering under.

ICHABOD
Wait...

Far under, near the bottle, some powder is bubbling.

Ichabod moves to the end of the bed and lifts, in pain. Young Masbath helps. They drag the bed to one side.

Under the bed: a Satanic PENTAGRAM has been DRAWN IN BLOOD.

Ichabod stares, trying to grasp the implication. Masbath is about to speak, but Ichabod puts a finger to his lips.

Ichabod moves to lock the door.

YOUNG MASBATH
(whispers)
Who did this?

Ichabod does not answer. He picks up a wash basin and dumps the water to wash the Pentagram away.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE/CHURCH -- DAY

WAGONS, HORSES and TOWNSPEOPLE swarm. A CROWD loots the town's general store. Provisions are passed along man to man and loaded on wheelbarrows.

(CONTINUED)

All up and down the long straight road, home owners board up windows with lumber.

Ichabod and Young Masbath ride, passing many angry faces.

ICHABOD
Panic has set in.

They stop, tying their horses and climbing stairs to the door of the "NOTARY." Ichabod looks off...

DOWN THE ROAD, at the far end, people head to the church. Much activity there as well.

ICHABOD
Sanctuary. Or, so they hope.

Families put up tents all around the church within the bordering wrought-iron fence. Supplies abound.

People work to build and erect massive wooden crosses.

INT. NOTARY PUBLIC, HARDENBROOK'S OFFICES -- DAY

Tidy room. Young Masbath watches Ichabod hand a slip of paper to the elderly Notary, Hardenbrook.

ICHABOD
Do you have these persons wills?

HARDENBROOK
I have everything... last testaments... birth certificates, death certificates... deeds.

ICHABOD
Yes, sir... but, do you have these?

Hardenbrook studies the paper with his one good eye.

HARDENBROOK
Certainly... certainly.

Hardenbrook nods, handing the list back, grinning. Ichabod stands waiting. Hardenbrook is still nodding.

ICHABOD
May I see them, Master Hardenbrook?

HARDENBROOK
Hmm? See them?

ICHABOD
May we look at them now?

HARDENBROOK
Of course. You want them... it shall not take long. Wait here.

Hardenbrook heads across the room. Ichabod offers the list.

ICHABOD
Maybe you should take this.

HARDENBROOK
A fine idea.

Hardenbrook takes it and exits. Young Masbath sits.

YOUNG MASBATH
What good is this?

ICHABOD
To discover what might have been taken from those who died, it will help to know what was there that could be taken in the first place.

Ichabod waits. After a moment, he looks uncertain. He crosses to the half-open door...

INT. NOTARY PUBLIC, RECORDS ROOM -- DAY

Ichabod sticks his head in, not liking what he sees.

Hardenbrook's amidst unbelievable disarray. Tables, shelves, and baskets of unevenly piled documents.

Hardenbrook looks on a shelf, confused, then goes to a table, lifting papers, mumbling.

HARDENBROOK
Damn... damn... damn...

ICHABOD
Master Hardenbrook...

Hardenbrook turns, a bit startled.

ICHABOD
Perhaps, I could assist in finding them?

LANCASTER
Well... that might be... helpful.

INT. NOTARY PUBLIC, RECORDS ROOM (TIME CUT) -- DAY

Hardenbrook is asleep in a chair, snoring, blind eye open. Ichabod and Young Masbath face official-looking documents, with Ichabod focused on one will in hand.

YOUNG MASBATH
My father had farm land. It was the only thing we owned of any value.

ICHABOD
(still reading)
And it now belongs to you, according to Baltus. I heard him say it.

YOUNG MASBATH
Yes.

Ichabod turns the will in his hand to Masbath.

ICHABOD
Then look here at your father's will, and tell me why you are not listed.

Young Masbath takes it, boggled. Ichabod grabs another.

ICHABOD
Van Garrett had denoted his elder son in his last wishes; the same son murdered along with him. But Van Garrett's wife and two infant children are not written... and they were spared.
(picks up another will)
Do you see? Philipse had no family to bestow his farm to. But, here...
(picks up another)
The Widow Windsor was listed on her late husband's will. After her inheritance, she amended the document to include her bastard child. This is why the Horseman made absolutely certain to impale the unborn descendant.

Ichabod sits back.

ICHABOD
Only the heirs were killed. Proof that the Horseman slaughters by assignment.

YOUNG MASBATH
But, if the farm is not mine, who stole it away?

ICHABOD
No one yet, far as I can tell. It has gone intestate.

YOUNG MASBATH
In-test... what?

ICHABOD
Intestate. Your farm... all the farms... they belong to no one.

YOUNG MASBATH
What does it mean?

Ichabod stares off.

ICHABOD
Often in such cases, property which has gone intestate legally passes to whomever the deceased was indebted to. And, who in this town is owed a great many debts?

YOUNG MASBATH
(realization)
Baltus Van Tassel.

ICHABOD
Did your father take a loan?

YOUNG MASBATH
Yes. I rode with him on payment days.

Ichabod stands, grim, gathering wills and his ledger.

ICHABOD
Tonight, we answer questions. And, to discover who moves about the Van Tassel house after dark... all we need is a candle.

A LOUD NOISE is HEARD from the other room. Ichabod looks.

INT. HARDENBROOK'S OFFICES -- DAY

Ichabod bursts in. No one there. A chair has been knocked over and the front door is ajar. Ichabod moves...

EXT. NOTARY -- DAY

Ichabod exits. All around is the commotion in the square as before. No telling who it was who just fled.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- DAY

Young Masbath is seated, bored. Ichabod writes in his ledger. A KNOCK on the door. They both look up.

KATRINA (o.s.)
(from outside door)
Constable... are you there?
(long pause)
Ichabod?

The knob is tried and found locked. Pause. At the bottom of the door, a red rose is passed under.

This saddens Ichabod.

EXT. CHURCH -- NIGHT

Quiet night. The church is a sight, with a yard resembling an empty squatter's tent city, surrounded by crosses. Boarded over windows leak shafts of light.

MOVING PAST THE WINDOWS: many eyes peer out from the slats.

UP IN THE BELFRY, TWO RIFLEMEN are on watch.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Masbath are in darkness, still waiting. Ichabod takes the cover off a lantern, looks at a clock. Midnight, straight up. Ichabod stands, picks up an unlit candle.

ICHABOD
Midnight seems an appropriate time.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Young Masbath look out, cautious. They move to the nearest door.

Ichabod crouches, using the candle to mark the seam of the door and door frame. He's making a low, wax seal. If the door opens, the seal will break.

They move to a second door, quietly. Ichabod makes another low wax mark.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, MAIN ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Masbath come downstairs to a hall. Ichabod continues his wax marking at each door.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, BALTUS' OFFICE -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Young Masbath enter, shutting the door. Ichabod walks to shelves at Baltus' desk, looks through ribbon bound DOCUMENTS and hands some to Masbath.

Young Masbath pulls off the ribbon, pages through these "LOAN AGREEMENT" parchments. Ichabod brings another pile.

ICHABOD
(whispering)
They are alphabetical.

Young Masbath has the M's. "MARYIE," "MEGAPOLENISIS," AND "MELYN..." Not finding what he wants.

YOUNG MASBATH
There is no Masbath here. My father's loan papers are missing.

ICHABOD
(regarding his documents)
There are none for Magistrate Philipse either. "Paasch, James" "Pieter, Thomas" "Pos, William."

A FLOORBOARD CREAKS. Ichabod looks, blows out the lantern. He and Young Masbath stand frozen.

Across the room, light comes under the door, stops, then continues. A DOOR is HEARD OPENING and SHUTTING. Ichabod crosses to follow, pointing back.

ICHABOD
Keep looking. Then, hide in my room and bolt the door till I return.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Lantern light moves, far ahead. Ichabod follows.

EXT. FOREST, FURTHER ON -- NIGHT

Ichabod stops, hidden. He can see the light ahead, but it is no longer in motion. He advances.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- NIGHT

A lantern sits on a rock. On a blanket, a semi-naked MAN and semi-naked WOMAN are in the midst of rough SEX.

Ichabod crawls to peer from underbrush.

(CONTINUED)

The couple keeps coupling, with the man on top. His grunts and gasps are particularly desperate. He's all over the woman, who lays back... it is Lady Van Tassel.

Ichabod swallows, inches closer.

Lady Van Tassel pulls the man's shirt, exposes his flesh. She raises a small, sharp KNIFE behind his back.

Ichabod's eyes widen.

Lady Van Tassel brings the blade to her own hand, slicing deep in her palm. Blood flows. She rubs her cut hand over her partner's arching back, smearing blood.

Lady Van Tassel caresses the man's chest, neck, face... trailing blood. The man lifts his head, in ecstasy, sucks the woman's bloody fingers... it's Clergyman Steenwyck.

Ichabod backs away, having seen more than plenty.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Young Masbath unlocks the door. Ichabod enters.

YOUNG MASBATH
I was getting worried. Who was it?

ICHABOD
Lady Van Tassel.

YOUNG MASBATH
What was she doing?

ICHABOD
Something I really wish I had not seen. Never mind it. Did you find the victims' loan agreements?

YOUNG MASBATH
No. They are all missing.

This troubles Ichabod.

YOUNG MASBATH
There is more, though. While you were gone, I could hear someone else walking through the house.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Young Masbath creep round a corner. Going to the LAST DOOR, Ichabod crouches, eyes narrowing...

(CONTINUED)

ICHABOD
(whispers, to himself)
Katrina.

The wax seal is broken, flecks of wax on the floor.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FOYER AND HALL -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Masbath come downstairs, checking all the wax marks. Young Masbath finds one broken.

YOUNG MASBATH
Here.

Ichabod comes over, pushes the door...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

They enter. The kitchen is empty. Ichabod crosses to another door, crouches. Another broken wax mark.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SEWING ROOM -- NIGHT

They enter... the room with the elaborate loom. Ichabod moves his lantern to make a quick search, goes to table.

He touches the top of a candle. His finger comes away with a bit of still wet wax.

YOUNG MASBATH
There are no other doors. This is as far as she could have gone.

ICHABOD
It is nothing. She comes to read books, so her father will not find her.
(to convince himself)
It is absolutely nothing.

YOUNG MASBATH
What books?

ICHABOD
Fiction plays and novels. Baltus does not approve. Now, come. It may not be long before Lady Van Tassel returns.

YOUNG MASBATH
But, sir... what books? Where are they?

Ichabod stops, looking around. No books anywhere.

YOUNG MASBATH
If there is a secret place for books... it could be just as good for the missing loan agreements.

Ichabod ponders this without saying anything.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SEWING ROOM -- LATER NIGHT

SEARCH MONTAGE:

- Drawers are opened and searched, quietly.

- Young Masbath uses a candle to look up the fireplace.

- Ichabod opens a linen cabinet, unfolding blankets.

- Young Masbath looks in a closet filled with big spools of sewing thread. On his knees, pulls a wooden box forward. Inside it, he finds only old cups and silverware.

Ichabod pulls up a rug, feeling along the floorboards.

Young Masbath crawls, doing the same. He climbs under the loom, tapping on the floor. TAP... TAP... TAP...

He crawls further under the loom. TAP... TAP... PLONK. A hollow sound. He taps again... PLONK... PLONK.

YOUNG MASBATH
Constable.

Ichabod comes over as Young Masbath lifts a loose board. Under the floor, there are piles of books. Masbath brings them up, handing them to Ichabod, who studies the spines.

Young Masbath reaches in up to his shoulder. He comes up with "LOAN AGREEMENTS."

YOUNG MASBATH
Fie! Here they are.

Ichabod takes them. Names are near the top: "Masbath," "Van Garret," "Philipse," and "Killian."

Ichabod sits back, numb, his heart bitterly broken.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, KITCHEN -- MORNING

Lady Van Tassel prepares food with two servants at the open fireplace/oven. Ichabod enters, rushed.

ICHABOD
Excuse me, Lady Van Tassel...
Katrina is not in her room.

LADY VAN TASSEL
No. She has gone out.

ICHABOD
Where?

LADY VAN TASSEL
She has taken the last of our grain
to be milled.
(crossing to him)
You do have a background in the
medical arts, don't you, Constable?

ICHABOD
Very little. I must be going...

Lady Van Tassel holds out her cut palm, the gash sewn shut.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Will you look at this? I cut my hand
this morning. I sewed it myself, but
I am afraid it will go bad.

Ichabod takes her hand, distracted and nervous.

ICHABOD
It appears well. It has already
clotted.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Look closer. Do you have anything to
clean it with?

ICHABOD
It is fine. Now, I must...

Lady Van Tassel grabs Ichabod by the wrist, tight.

LADY VAN TASSEL
(whispering, close)
I know you saw me.

ICHABOD
What... ?

Lady Van Tassel glances to servants, keeps her voice low.

LADY VAN TASSEL
I know you followed last night. You
must promise not to tell Baltus...

Ichabod tries to pull away, but she grips tighter. The FRONT DOOR is HEARD SLAMMING. Ichabod is panicky.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Have mercy on me. Please... have mercy.

Ichabod pulls away just as Baltus enters. Lady Van Tassel goes back to work as if nothing happened.

BALTUS
Constable, it is urgent that we speak.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FRONT PORCH -- MORNING

Baltus leads Ichabod to the porch.

BALTUS
Clergyman Steenwyck is calling a meeting. This time he is determined to have you forced out, or worse.

ICHABOD
How did you hear this?

BALTUS
He came to me. He promised great violence. Said I should cast you out for my own protection.
(troubled pause)
I must speak honestly. There is no reason to think he will not meet with success.

Ichabod looks to barn, sees Masbath bringing the horses. The CHURCH BELL is HEARD TOLLING far away.

BALTUS
That is the meeting bell already calling. With the murder of Killian and Brom, no one sees any good from you. If... if you were to leave... you might be saving your own life.

Ichabod studies Baltus, then offers his hand. They shake.

ICHABOD
I appreciate your concern. I thank you, sir.

Ichabod hurries off, across the lawn, exasperated. He runs. Masbath runs to him. Ichabod takes Gunpowder and climbs up.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG MASBATH
(mounting his horse)
What now? Where is she?

ICHABOD
Things have become complicated. Katrina is at the mill. Ride ahead, find her and bring her to meet me outside the church. Find her at all costs. Quickly.

They ride, fast.

EXT. FOREST -- DAY

A conjuring pile of straw burns. Gloved hands unfold a paper filled with clippings of human hair. The hair is sprinkled on the fire.

A cloaked FIGURE is kneeled at the pile. The figure turns to remove a human SKULL from a cloth bag.

The skull is placed at center in the flames. It's teeth are sharp, cut to points. The HORSEMAN'S SKULL.

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

In the church yard refugee camp, food is prepared over fire. People inhabit the tents.

INT. CHURCH, STEENWYCK'S QUARTERS -- MORNING

IN THE CHURCH: it's crowded with families. Pews filled with bedding and belongings. Steenwyck comes to CLOSE the DOUBLE DOORS of his quarters, turning, angry.

FATHER STEENWYCK
You are astonishing, Constable. Do you truly think your ridiculous accusations frighten me?

Ichabod is doing nothing to hide his disdain.

ICHABOD
Only if I repeat them outside this room. And, I will if I must...
(points to doors)
Out there, for all to hear. Or... you may speak, as planned. But, you tell them you feel compelled to move on to greener pastures.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER STEENWYCK
No. You will not run me out. No one will believe a word of what you say.

ICHABOD
Oh? Far as I can tell, a rumor does not travel alone for long here.

FATHER STEENWYCK
Are you a deist? Is that it? A free thinker who does not believe in divinity.

ICHABOD
It is only important what you are. An adulterer...

FATHER STEENWYCK
I am the Lord's voice in this town.

ICHABOD
Wallowing in sin and lust...

FATHER STEENWYCK
They need guidance.

ICHABOD
Wallowing quite literally in blood.

FATHER STEENWYCK
(snapping, quaking)
Damn you, sir! God damn you to hell!

ICHABOD
He may. But, not soon enough for you, and not on your behalf.

Ichabod walks. Steenwyck is humiliated.

ICHABOD
You are so upset now... and yet, you seemed in such good spirits last night.

FATHER STEENWYCK
You cannot do this. I am a man of God!

ICHABOD
Climb to the top of the tallest ladder you can find, Father. That is the closest you ever come to God.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Pews are packed. Steenwyck enters, walks to the altar. EVERYONE QUIETS. Steenwyck has composed himself, barely.

FATHER STEENWYCK
My friends... dear friends. Those of you still on your farms, I thank you for coming.

He sees Ichabod near the back. THUNDER is HEARD OUTSIDE.

FATHER STEENWYCK
I... I address unfortunate business.
(pause)
I am forced to take my leave from Sleepy Hollow. I will be moving on to do the Lord's work elsewhere.

The GATHERERS MURMUR shock. Ichabod walks out.

EXT. THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD -- DAY

Raining hard. Baltus and Lady Van Tassel ride.

BALTUS
Hurry along. The meeting has most certainly already begun. We do not want Steenwyck as our enemy.

Lady Van Tassel trails. WOOD is HEARD SPLINTERING...

Just off the road, a tree falls...

The trunk catches Lady Van Tassel's horse on its rear flank.

The horse falls. Lady Van Tassel hits the dirt.

Baltus looks back, halting.

Lady Van Tassel looks up to Baltus in fear, then turns.

Behind her, the Headless Horseman trots from the forest on Daredevil, stops. Calm. He takes his axe in hand.

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

Storming. The meeting is letting out. Near the churchyard gate, Young Masbath rides with Katrina following on a horse cart. Ichabod walks up as Katrina dismounts.

KATRINA
What is so urgent?

ICHABOD
Come with me.

Ichabod leads her to where they can talk away from others.

KATRINA
Why have I not seen your face for so long? You look much better.

She touches his face, but he takes her hand, places the loan agreements there.

ICHABOD
Explain these. I found them secreted away in the sewing room.

Katrina's expression changes just so slightly to guilt.

ICHABOD
Why... why have I scrambled and run and clawed in all directions, only to find you against me?

He stares at her. Katrina stares back, in a small way defeated. She looks for an out, but there is none.

KATRINA
I have been reading your journal. I'm sorry. I found it too fascinating to resist.
(pause, ashamed)
I rode to catch up with you at the Notary, out of curiosity. Before I found you though, I overheard what you were said.

ICHABOD
It was you there?

KATRINA
When... when you spoke father's name along with accusations, I could not believe it. I had to hide these... at least till I could confront him myself.

ICHABOD
And, what did he say?

KATRINA
He did not do these things. If you knew him, you would realize...

ICHABOD
What did <u>he</u> say, Katrina?

KATRINA
I have not been able to face him yet.

ICHABOD
The loans give the land to your father. It does not matter survivors are still on their farms. They could be thrown off... tomorrow... a year from now.

KATRINA
Yes, I have seen that, and I told you why I hid them.

ICHABOD
What would you have me believe?

KATRINA
(tiring, angry)
If you think I am behind this, say it.

ICHABOD
The name Van Tassel is blackened. You share that name.

KATRINA
Call me a liar, then, and a murderess. Say it, out and out.

Many people are starting to notice the confrontation.

ICHABOD
Katrina...

KATRINA
Speak the words, Constable. What is stopping you? What has happened to your ability to transcend sentimentality?

Emotions tear at him. Rain seems to pound down harder.

KATRINA
Oh, no. No. Please... don't dare stand looking as if you still care for me, after all that you have said. If I were to confess, would that ease your suffering? Would that make it easier for you to hate me?!

A TORTURED CRY is HEARD O.S.

Baltus comes charging through the square on his horse.

BALTUS
The Horseman is coming!

He's barely hanging on. He stops, practically falling off, running towards Katrina and Ichabod.

BALTUS
Save me...

KATRINA
Father?

BALTUS
He killed her...

Baltus grasps Katrina, fearful. HOOFBEATS are HEARD.

BALTUS
The Horseman has killed her.

Far behind, the Horseman rides to follow, axe held up. Instant mayhem -- people scatter all directions, screaming.

Baltus runs headlong to the church.

KATRINA
Father!

Katrina runs after Baltus. Ichabod backs away, watching the Horseman come, then heads to the church with Masbath.

Baltus pushes through the iron gate, into tent city, joining the swarm of townsfolk pouring into the church.

The Horseman rides behind, closing the gap. Men, women and children run for cover all along the square.

Amidst the churchyard panic, Ichabod looks back...

The Horseman reaches the open gate and Daredevil suddenly rears up, snorting, unwilling to enter.

The Horseman grabs Daredevil's reins, tries to move forward again. Same result. Daredevil freaks out.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Baltus makes his way in, shoving. People are still clamoring in through the doors.

Men pass rifles from stockpiles and climb onto pews at boarded windows. Women herd children into a cellar.

Baltus searches for a hiding place. He looks across the church to see Steenwyck closing the doors of his living quarters. Baltus moves...

BALTUS
Steenwyck!

At the front doors, Katrina squeezes in with Ichabod and Young Masbath just as people are forcing the doors closed. It's madness. People outside begin pounding.

Katrina searches.

KATRINA
Father!

Ichabod goes to a window, looking out between boards.

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

Across the yard, the Horseman gives his axe an underhand toss to the ground inside the gate.

The AXE instantly BEGINS TO DEGRADE -- DUST in the rain.

The Horseman rides, keeping outside the fence.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Ichabod comes away from the window, looking to panicked citizens. He sees Katrina moving up the aisle...

She's heading towards Baltus, who slams against the door to Steenwyck's room.

BALTUS
Damn you, Steenwyck! Help me! Let me in!

RIFLES BOOM LOUDLY as men at the windows begin firing.

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

The Horseman circles, under fire.

Great clouds of gun smoke shoot from the church.

Men fire down from the belfry.

Parts of the Horseman and Daredevil splatter red into the rain as slugs hit without effect.

AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CHURCH, the Horseman comes around, heading to the town square.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Rifleman shout to each other, running to the opposite windows to follow the Horseman.

Young Masbath grabs a rifle and leaps to join the brigade.

Baltus is still beating Steenwyck's door when a HUGE FARMER grips Baltus angrily and throws him...

HUGE FARMER
You'll kill us all!

Baltus falls, knocking over pews. Katrina's nearby.

HUGE FARMER
You're the one the Horseman wants. Why should we die for you!?

KATRINA
No!

The huge farmer picks Baltus up, dragging him and shoving Katrina aside as she approaches.

Ichabod's pushing past people, trying to reach them.

EXT. CHURCH/TOWN SQUARE -- DAY

The Horseman brings Daredevil to a halt, yanking a large coil of ROPE off a hitching post.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

The huge farmer shoves Baltus to the floor again.

HUGE FARMER
Get out!

Others join the rage, pulling Baltus towards the front of the church, shouting. Ichabod struggles to push them off.

ICHABOD
Stop this!

Ichabod gets to Baltus' side, trying to protect.

ICHABOD
The Horseman cannot enter! It does not matter who he wants, he cannot cross the gate!

At the windows, ONE RIFLEMAN turns, crying out.

ONE RIFLEMAN
He's coming back!

More panic. The huge farmer moves towards Baltus.

HUGE FARMER
We have to save ourselves!

Baltus pulls the pistol from Ichabod's holster, brandishing.

BALTUS
No! Get away from me!

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

The Horseman rides past the front, fired upon.

He halts at the wrought iron gate, reaching to yank off one POST which is pointed on top, like an arrow head.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Baltus holds everyone's back with the pistol.

BALTUS
The next person to lay hands on me will have a bullet. Stand off!

KATRINA
Father...

BALTUS
No! We're safe here.
(points at Ichabod)
You said it. The Horseman will not have me.

CRASH -- the harpoon-like post SPEARS through a window, trailing rope tied to it...

CRACK -- SKEWERS Baltus from behind, the bloodied point bursting out his breast bone.

Baltus looks down, drops the gun... clutching the post with both hands. Blood streams out his mouth. Katrina screams.

The rope yanks Baltus back. He SLAMS into the WINDOW...

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

Baltus CRASHES out, hits the ground, dragged...

(CONTINUED)

Outside the fence, Daredevil runs with the rope tied around his saddle pommel. The Horseman strides forward, sword out.

Baltus SLAMS the fence and the rope snaps. He is held there awkwardly, gurgling blood.

The Horseman reaches Baltus... chops off his head.

INT. SLEEPY HOLLOW FORESTS -- DAY

The storm has passed. Empty forest. Long, peaceful pause, till Ichabod makes his way through, searching the ground.

Ichabod comes to look down a small hill. The corpse of Lady Van Tassel lies headless, in a dirty, torn dress.

Ichabod walks to the body. Lady Van Tassel's arm is twisted behind. The sewn cut on the palm of her hand faces up.

ICHABOD
(shouting back)
Here! I have found her... !
(looking at corpse, quiet and miserable)
Here she is.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL -- EARLY EVENING

Doctor Lancaster comes out from where Katrina is asleep. He closes the door, wipes his sweaty face. Ichabod waits.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
It has been a terrible jolt to her nerves.

ICHABOD
You will stay at her side?

Doctor Lancaster nods. Ichabod walks.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE -- EARLY EVENING

It's getting dark. Ichabod comes out and crosses the porch. A few of the Hollow's residents are here. Young Masbath gets up and follows Ichabod onto the lawn.

Ichabod walks without waiting.

YOUNG MASBATH
She's the one who controlled the Horseman, isn't she, sir?
(no answer)
Sir?

ICHABOD
I need time for thinking. Without you hanging on my coattails for a change.

Ichabod keeps walking. Young Masbath stops, wounded.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, TREE OF THE DEAD -- NIGHT

Ichabod stands holding a torch, looking up. The whole area is bright from the light off a giant fire.

There are broken lanterns and barrels around the agonized, twisted tree. The tree is aflame, fire dancing up the trunk and through every branch to lick the sky.

EXT. FOREST -- DAY

Dawn. Ichabod is seated overlooking the Hudson. He stares at the beauty around him, brooding through bleary eyes. Gunpowder is tied to a tree. BIRDS SING.

The ledger is open in Ichabod's lap. He thumbs pages absently, just keeps staring off.

EXT. FOREST -- DAY (TIME CUT)

A fire burns in a circle of rocks. Ichabod's ledger is thrown in. The pages catch quickly.

Ichabod watches, then walks away. He's about to climb onto Gunpowder, but on second thought he opens his satchel and digs out a BOOK. He walks back to the fire, throws it on...

"Romeo and Juliet." Flames devour it.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, TREE OF THE DEAD -- DAY

The clearing is silent. The twisted tree still stands, smoldering, impressive as ever, or perhaps even more so with the alien appearance its blackened skin now affords it.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod packs up baggage. Young Masbath is miserable.

YOUNG MASBATH
Won't you change your mind, sir? What can I say to convince you?

ICHABOD
Nothing. To hell with this place and all the people here.

Ichabod closes a bag, throws it with others.

YOUNG MASBATH
Why... why are you like this?

ICHABOD
(pause, softening)
You do not know all that has happened.
(pause)
You cannot understand.

EXT. VAN TASSEL ESTATE -- NIGHT

A coach, with Gunpowder as one of its team, waits in the orchard. Van Ripper comes to meet Ichabod and Masbath.

ICHABOD
Half now. Half when we reach the city.

Ichabod hands Van Ripper money. Van Ripper takes the baggage. Ichabod looks to the Manor House. Only one light shines, in a second floor window.

Katrina can be seen there a moment as she closes curtains.

Ichabod turns to Young Masbath, who is beginning to cry.

ICHABOD
This is farewell.

YOUNG MASBATH
Take me with you. There's nothing left for me here.

ICHABOD
I cannot.
(bends to Masbath)
You should not worry.
(pause, sorrow)
Van Ripper and his wife will look after you. They will. You will be well cared for.

Young Masbath hugs. Ichabod hugs back, swallowing.

ICHABOD
I am sorry.
(quietly)
Forgive me. I failed you.

Ichabod releases and goes quickly away, finding this misery unbearable. He climbs in the coach.

YOUNG MASBATH
Do not go, Constable. How can you leave?

INSIDE THE COACH, Ichabod slumps back in darkness and closes his eyes. He pounds twice on the coach wall.

OUTSIDE, Van Ripper whips the reins. The coach starts. Young Masbath follows. The coach picks up speed on the long straight road.

Young Masbath stops, wiping tears.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE/CHURCH -- NIGHT

Ichabod's coach moves through the town square. A few people in the churchyard's tent city come out to watch it pass.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

The door is pushed open. Young Masbath enters, looks around the empty room. He goes to sit in a chair at the work table, crossing his arms and resting his head.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

A plate of food sits untouched. Katrina is slumped down in a chair, heartbroken, staring into the fireplace.

Behind her, a shadow moves across the room.

EXT. THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD -- NIGHT

Van Ripper leads the coach through the stone pillars marking the entrance of Sleepy Hollow.

INT. ICHABOD'S COACH -- NIGHT

Ichabod takes off his hat, sets it on the seat. The window between him and the driver slides open.

VAN RIPPER
Sir... this is yours.
(offering something)
The Van Tassel girl said to give it to you after you were gone.

Ichabod takes it. It is the bird/cage spinning toy. He studies it. What melancholy.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Katrina sits with her eyes closed. A BOARD is HEARD CREAKING. She sits up. Suddenly, a FIGURE in black is behind her as she turns. WHACK! -- a gloved fist strikes.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

A dull THUD is HEARD downstairs, like a body falling. Young Masbath takes notice. He moves to the door...

INT. ICHABOD'S COACH -- NIGHT

Ichabod turns the strings on the bird/cage toy, ponders it.

The paper disk spins, images flickering until the bird appears to be inside the cage.

Ichabod keeps spinning it, looks out the window.

A tear rolls down his cheek.

The bird cage toy's rotation slows... stops.

Ichabod looks at it a long moment, then pockets it and leans forward to the window at front.

OUTSIDE THE COACH

Ichabod's face appears behind Van Ripper.

ICHABOD
Van Ripper, turn the coach about!

VAN RIPPER
What did you say?

ICHABOD
Turn around. Now!

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FOYER -- NIGHT

Young Masbath comes down the stairs, looking around meekly.

YOUNG MASBATH
Hello? Katrina?

Masbath starts down a hall. He does not see, in another room, Katrina's body is dragged across the floor.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE, DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE -- NIGHT

The coach comes to Lancaster's. Ichabod climbs out before it even stops fully, satchel in hand. He hurries...

INT. DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, PARLOR -- NIGHT

Doctor Lancaster, half asleep, comes to answer BANGING on his door. Ichabod pushes past, taking Lancaster's lantern.

ICHABOD
Pardon the intrusion...

INT. DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, MEDICAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod enters. There are two coffins on the floor.

ICHABOD
I never examined these bodies.

Ichabod removes the lid from one coffin. Lancaster is about to say something indignant, but then just looks disgusted.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
Oh... help yourself, you pompous ass.
I will be in bed.

ICHABOD
Would you stay, doctor? I may need assistance.

Lancaster reluctantly remains. Ichabod stares at the dead Lady Van Tassel. The neck wound is covered by a stained brown cloth, which Ichabod unwraps.

ICHABOD
Stains of blood.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
What of it?

Ichabod takes out one of the lenses that survived the magnification spectacles, bends to examine the neck.

ICHABOD
Jagged flesh.
(pause)
The Horseman did not do this.

Ichabod moves to the side of the coffin, lifting the hand with the stitched gash on its palm.

ICHABOD
Here, Doctor. Hold this just so...

Lancaster holds the lens so that Ichabod can study the cut through it. Ichabod takes a scalpel-like knife from his satchel, lifts the hand and cuts stitches.

THROUGH THE LENS: the gash spreads easily, soft, bloodless.

(CONTINUED)

ICHABOD
No clotting or gathering of pus. No healing at all.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
What?

ICHABOD
When this cut was made, this person was already dead.
(stands straight)
This is not Lady Van Tassel.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Young Masbath enters. The door swings shut.

YOUNG MASBATH
Katrina.
(steps forward)
Is anyone here?

Behind him, the door SLAMS open -- Lady Van Tassel reaches to grab Young Masbath by the throat.

EXT. CHURCH/TOWN SQUARE -- NIGHT

Ichabod charges up to the church doors, pounding.

ICHABOD
Open the door. Open up, damn it!
(pounds, shouting)
Lady Van Tassel is alive. The Horseman is her puppet. Please... !

The door opens and Huge Farmer points a rifle at Ichabod. Frightened people peer out from behind.

HUGE FARMER
Aren't we rid of you?

ICHABOD
Listen to me. Lady Van Tassel has faked her death. I need able men...

HUGE FARMER
She's dead, and you have gone mad.

ICHABOD
No...

(CONTINUED)

HUGE FARMER
(steps forward)
Get out! Isn't it enough that you have ruined this town? Go!

Ichabod backs away from the gun, frustrated, runs...

At the DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, Van Ripper is still on the coach. Ichabod sprints over, breathless, taking out his pistol.

ICHABOD
Van Ripper... do you have a gun?

VAN RIPPER
Yes. Here...

Van Ripper hold up a rifle. Ichabod holds out his hand.

ICHABOD
May I see it?

Van Ripper's confused, but hands the rifle over. Ichabod immediately points his pistol at Van Ripper.

ICHABOD
Get down. Hurry!

Van Ripper climbs off. Ichabod climbs up, whips the horses.

ICHABOD
Sorry.

Van Ripper watches the coach leave, still with his hands up.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

In a wooded area, Katrina lies unconscious. Gloved hands reach to her hair and cut off a clump with SCISSORS.

A conjuring pile has been made, containing a small animal's heart with an iron nail through it. Katrina's hair is added and the pile is lit to burn.

Nearby, Young Masbath watches, on his belly with his hands tied behind his back.

Lady Van Tassel whispers over the fire, her white horse tied nearby. She looks to Katrina, who stirs.

Lady Van Tassel takes the Horseman's skull from a bag over her shoulder, places the skull in the flames. THUNDER is HEARD. Lady Van Tassel looks up, smiles.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, TREE OF THE DEAD -- NIGHT

The wind tosses leaves in swirls. The twisted tree opens wide with a RUMBLE -- shafts of light shooting out.

EXT. THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD -- NIGHT

Ichabod drives the coach hard ahead.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Katrina sits up, groggy. Lady Van Tassel looks down at her.

KATRINA
You... you are alive.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Am I? Or, are you and Young Masbath dead along with me?

Katrina sees Young Masbath, and beyond him, the dying fire.

YOUNG MASBATH
She commands the Horseman.

LADY VAN TASSEL
And, quite beautifully done, wouldn't you say? It is almost over.

THUNDER again. Wind starts to pick up.

LADY VAN TASSEL
(of the wind)
He rides tonight.

KATRINA
Father saw you die.

LADY VAN TASSEL
He saw me thrown... saw the Horseman looming over me as I fled. Things I wanted him to see. But, as long as I govern the Horseman, he cannot harm me. Baltus did not stay enough to see that. He ran as a coward, unfettered by my fate.

YOUNG MASBATH
Then, whose body was it... ?

(CONTINUED)

LADY VAN TASSEL
The precious servant girl Sarah. I killed her and kept her body hidden, till I needed it. And, when I return to the Hollow tomorrow, my version of the truth will come to pass.
(faking meekness)
I mean, there I was that fateful day, following Baltus into the woods. I did not know what he was up to... where he was going. I worried for his safety.

Katrina cautiously moves the hand she's supporting herself with, feels a rock and clutches it.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Imagine my surprise, finding him on a liaison with a common servant. A girl who had apparently become his secret love.

KATRINA
No one will believe your lies, whore.

LADY VAN TASSEL
This whore will see your mouth shut forever very soon. But... I am not going to kill you. Not me...

She picks up the Horseman's skull in her gloved hand.

LADY VAN TASSEL
He will have that honor.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS -- NIGHT

The Horseman rides Daredevil, a freight train of moldering flesh, heading towards a chasm with no bridge.

They reach it, galloping in mid-air to the other side.

EXT. LONG STRAIGHT ROAD/VAN TASSEL ESTATE -- NIGHT

Ichabod guides the coach into the Van Tassel orchard.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Lady Van Tassel admires the skull.

(CONTINUED)

LADY VAN TASSEL
(mock sorrow)
Woe is me, that spying on my husband in his filthy indiscretion, I saw he and Sarah attacked by the Horseman. Oh, pity me... so overcome was I that I wandered in the Western Woods... dazed... nearly blind from terror.

Lady Van Tassel crouches, rubbing dirt on her face.

LADY VAN TASSEL
And, tomorrow is my grand performance, having barely survived the elements...
(more emoting)
By sheer luck I found my way back to the Hollow. But... what do I find here... ? My dear, sweet step-daughter Katrina is dead. Why has God forsaken her?

Seeing that Lady Van Tassel lavish attention on Katrina, Masbath takes this opportunity to ease onto his knees.

LADY VAN TASSEL
(of herself, pleased)
No one will suspect this sad woman who has been through such an ordeal. With only the empty solace of her money and land to comfort her.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ichabod leaps from the coach, bounds up the porch.

ICHABOD
Katrina!

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

ICHABOD is HEARD. Lady Van Tassel turns, astonished.

KATRINA
Murderer!

Katrina slings the rock -- strikes Lady Van Tassel in the head, a glancing blow that knocks her down. Katrina runs.

Katrina grips Young Masbath, helping him up...

But, Lady Van Tassel scrambles up, grabs Katrina and throws her back to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

Lady Van Tassel steps hard on Katrina's ankle, touches her forehead, bleeding, pissed.

LADY VAN TASSEL
You've been a naughty girl.

Young Masbath leaps to action, charging head first -- slams into Lady Van Tassel, sends her backwards.

Katrina runs and pulls Masbath up. They flee.

KATRINA
Ichabod!

Lady Van Tassel rolls, recovering, not very concerned.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Little bitch.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ichabod comes out the open front doors... hearing...

KATRINA (O.S.)
(far away)
Ichabod!

Ichabod climbs back on the coach, taking off.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Katrina and Young Masbath run out from a line of trees.

KATRINA
Ichabod!

YOUNG MASBATH
Here we are!

BEHIND IN THE FOREST, Lady Van Tassel rides her white horse, in no hurry. Wind kicks hard. HOOFBEATS are HEARD.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Run, Katrina! Fast as your pretty legs will carry you. It makes no difference.

ON THE LAWN, Ichabod drives towards Katrina and Masbath.

Behind, at the tree line, Lady Van Tassel holds up the Horseman's skull, wind tossing her dress and hair.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Nothing will stop him now!

At mid-field, Ichabod reaches Katrina and Masbath.

ICHABOD
Climb up!

YOUNG MASBATH
Lady Van Tassel...

ICHABOD
I know. Hold on.

With Katrina and Masbath on board, Ichabod turns the coach. Katrina unties Masbath's hands. HOOFBEATS GET LOUDER.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Olly-olly oxen-free!

Ichabod looks back towards Lady Van Tassel.

At the treeline, the Horseman breaks into the open, hell on horseback. Full speed ahead.

ICHABOD
Christ.

EXT. THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD -- NIGHT

The coach hits the long straight road, away from the house.

Katrina and Masbath hold on as the coach shakes violently.

KATRINA
Where are we going?

ICHABOD
I do not know. Away.

YOUNG MASBATH
Here he comes!

Behind, the Horseman can be seen on the forest bordered road. Closing fast. Breakneck pace.

ICHABOD
We might make it to the church.

Masbath takes a lantern, crawls back to the roof.

KATRINA
Masbath... !

He ignores, reaching the rear of the coach and throwing the lantern at the Horseman. It smashes on the trail.

(CONTINUED)

ICHABOD
Damn it, boy, get back here!

Young Masbath slides back. Katrina helps him.

YOUNG MASBATH
What can we do?

ICHABOD
Take the reins.

Young Masbath takes them. Ichabod slings Van Ripper's rifle over his shoulder and starts back. Katrina grips him.

ICHABOD
Masbath is right. We must do something.

She releases. Ichabod gets to the luggage area at the rear, struggling to open a storage box.

Behind, the Horseman draws his sword, closer.

Ichabod opens the box, hefting out a long, jagged SAW.

KATRINA
Ichabod!

Ichabod looks. The Horseman rides up, swinging...

Ichabod recoils -- THWACK -- just missed by sword.

The Horseman lets the coach get a ahead, shifting to the other side of the trail... coming along side.

Ichabod backpedals, looking to Masbath.

ICHABOD
Keep him off! Block him!

Masbath guides the horses over. The Horseman must fall behind to avoid the wheels.

The coach hits a large, fallen tree trunk.

Ichabod bounces, falling...

He hangs off the side of the coach.

Katrina climbs to offer her hand. Ichabod offers the saw.

ICHABOD
Take it!

Katrina takes the saw. Now with both hands, Ichabod tries for better purchase. He grips the coach door. It opens...

(CONTINUED)

Ichabod clings to the open door as branches slam him.

He's reaching to the coach threshold, reaching...

Ichabod pulls himself inside.

BOOM -- the door hits a tree trunk, bashed to pieces.

Ichabod looks out from the coach, dazed. He climbs.

Katrina looks back as Young Masbath guides the coach to block the Horseman again.

The Horseman sheaths his sword, riding... reaching to grip the back corner of the coach.

The Horseman dismounts, clinging, climbing...

Ichabod takes the rifle off his shoulder, aiming...

BANG! -- splattering the Horseman's hand point blank. The Horseman hangs on with his other hand.

The Horseman re-grips with the blasted hand, amazing since it now all mush and bone.

Ichabod throws the rifle on his way to the driver's perch, taking the saw from Katrina.

ICHABOD
Move forward!

Katrina looks to the horses, then at Ichabod.

ICHABOD
Go!

Ichabod takes the reins from Young Masbath.

ICHABOD
Help her.

Reins in one hand and saw in the other, Ichabod waits. The Horseman rises up and moves in, taking out his sword.

Young Masbath climbs down to the wooden pole connecting the coach to the bridles, puts out his hand. Katrina takes it.

Behind, the Horseman swings. Ichabod blocks with the saw.

Young Masbath guides Katrina as she leaps onto one horse. Bareback. Young Masbath straddles the horse beside her.

The Horseman swings, backhanded... knocks the sword from Ichabod's hand as Ichabod falls back...

Ichabod hits the bridle post, hanging onto straps for dear life. His feet drag on the trail.

Above, the Horseman comes to the driver's perch, close enough to kill Katrina. He raises his sword...

Katrina screams, ducking, helpless...

Below, Ichabod pulls a bolt from the coach's hitching-rod.

He shoves off with his feet.

The Horseman swings... missing.

The horses detach from the coach, dragging Ichabod along.

The coach careens out of control.

It flies off the trail, hits an incline and sails off, throwing the Horseman.

The coach hits a tree trunk and SMASHES.

FURTHER DOWN THE TRAIL, the coach horses stop. Young Masbath and Katrina climb off as Ichabod gets to his feet, hurting, clutching his previously wounded shoulder.

YOUNG MASBATH
What now?

ICHABOD
I doubt that's the end.

KATRINA
The church.

ICHABOD
He moves too fast.

Ichabod unhooks a lantern off the bridle rail. The trail behind is silent, till a bone chilling SCREECH is HEARD.

KATRINA
What was that?

ICHABOD
His horse.

They start moving. Ichabod looks around. He sees...

ICHABOD
There...

Through the tree line, the Hollow's massive windmill can be seen against the sky. Katrina and Young Masbath run.

EXT. WINDMILL FIELD -- NIGHT

Ichabod, Katrina and Young Masbath book into this open area, heading to the windmill. Another HORRIBLE SQUEAL echoes.

Ichabod looks over his shoulder.

Heavy, low handing BRANCHES and VINES at the forest edge creep to life, parting... forming a sort of black tunnel.

ICHABOD
He's coming!

The Horseman gallops out, throwing leaves in his wake.

ICHABOD
Hurry!

The Horseman readies a battle axe.

Ichabod gets under the windmill, helping Young Masbath up the ladder and in. Katrina next.

The Horseman is almost there.

Ichabod follows Katrina. He gets in, feet dangling. The Horseman dismounts...

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

Ichabod leaps up and struggles with the heavy trap door... slams it. He closes the latch just as the Horseman hits. The door buckles.

YOUNG MASBATH
It won't hold.

Ichabod goes to a large GRINDSTONE against a wall. He struggles to roll it.

Young Masbath helps him roll it to the trap door. It falls on top with a thud. The Horseman's sword jabs up through a grindstone's center hole.

The sword withdraws. A POUNDING begins.

EXT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The Horseman chops at the door with his axe.

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

POUNDING CONTINUES. The grindstone shifts. Katrina and Young Masbath back away. Ichabod holds his lantern up, desperate for ideas, searching.

Above, to the right, is the milling platform, where grain is ground and bagged. To the left is the crooked staircase.

Ichabod picks up a bailing hook, a plan forming. He gives his lantern to Katrina and points.

ICHABOD
Get up those stairs. Open the door to the roof and wait.

Katrina and Young Masbath obey. Ichabod crosses and climbs the ladder to the milling platform. He grasps a wooden lever, pulling it. Gears above begin to turn.

EXT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The windmill's rotors CREAK to life, spinning.

UNDER THE WINDMILL, the Horseman keeps chopping. His axe exposes grindstone, throwing sparks.

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

Katrina looks down from the stairs.

The Horseman's axe pries at the seam of the trap door.

KATRINA
Ichabod...

ICHABOD
Keep climbing. I will follow...

Ichabod pulls bags of grain, lining them up at the edge of the milling platform.

ICHABOD
(under his breath)
Hopefully.

ABOVE, Young Masbath reaches the ceiling, throws open the door to the roof.

BELOW, Ichabod cuts holes into the grain bags, so milled grain spills out and falls to the floor, creating dust.

He grabs one open bag and dumps it. More grain dust.

EXT. WINDMILL ROOF -- NIGHT

Masbath and Katrina come out. Rotors spin behind them.

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

Ichabod sees below... the Horseman sticks a hand through, trying to push the grindstone aside, then withdrawing. The HACKING axe continues. Won't be long.

Ichabod grabs one half-full bag of grain, swings it with effort, throws...

The bag smashes on the grindstone, busting the door...

EXT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The grindstone falls through, SLAMMING the Horseman down...

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

Ichabod slices into a sack hanging from a pulley system. More and more dust rises.

Below, the Horseman enters. Katrina shouts from above.

YOUNG MASBATH
Look out!

The Horseman moves toward the ladder milling platform ladder, but Ichabod grabs it, pulling it up...

The Horseman just misses the final rung.

Ichabod throws the ladder aside as the Horseman backs off.

Ichabod looks to the staircase. No way to climb down from the milling platform and get there.

The Horseman runs and leaps, grabbing a hanging chain...

The Horseman climbs the chain, swinging...

Ichabod runs across the platform, jumps...

Ichabod grasps the frail rail of the staircase, barely.

The rail creaks, about to break. Behind, the Horseman lands on the milling platform.

Ichabod is loosing grip. Young Masbath races down the stairs, grabs his hand. He pulls Ichabod up.

(CONTINUED)

Ichabod's pistol slips from its holster and falls.

Ichabod and Young Masbath look...

The Horseman, following Ichabod's lead, runs across the milling platform and leaps...

Grabs the staircase rail, only a few feet from Ichabod and Masbath. Ichabod kicks the rail, breaking it...

The Horseman falls in billowing dust, crashing below.

Ichabod pushes Masbath up the stairs.

EXT. WINDMILL ROOF -- NIGHT

Katrina helps them onto the roof.

KATRINA
Quickly, close it.

ICHABOD
No.
(takes lantern, points)
Get to the crest of the roof and be ready to jump.

YOUNG MASBATH
Jump? Jump where?

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The Horseman runs, agile, up stairs.

EXT. WINDMILL ROOF -- NIGHT

Ichabod shepherds Katrina and Young Masbath to the edge where the rotors spin close.

ICHABOD
The blades will carry us to the ground. Face front and wait for me.

KATRINA
I... I can't do this.

ICHABOD
We have no choice.

Ichabod moves back to the trap door.

Katrina and Young Masbath look at the rotors, and down at the long distance between them and the ground.

(CONTINUED)

ICHABOD
Be ready...

Ichabod throws the lantern into the windmill and runs.

ICHABOD
Now!

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The Horseman continues up. The lantern falls past.

EXT. WINDMILL, ROOF -- NIGHT

Young Masbath jumps. Ichabod grips Katrina and jumps...

They hit one rotor and cling to the frame and cloth. The rotor begins its downwards swing.

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The lantern hits the ground and shatters. FLAMES EXPLODE!

Grain dust is consumed instantaneously -- FLAMES ROAR upwards, filling the windmill...

Engulfing the Horseman.

EXT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The rotor is halfway to its lowest point. Masbath, Katrina and Ichabod hang on as the entire structure trembles.

BOOM -- flames shoot out the windows, doors and seams, lighting up the night.

On the rattling rotor, Ichabod struggles to hold the frame with one hand and keep a grip on Katrina.

Masbath drops. Ichabod releases Katrina, then drops.

They hit the ground. Ichabod rolls, gasping, holding his shoulder. They all look at each other in disbelief a moment. Ichabod lets out a sort of rasping laugh, standing.

ICHABOD
Okay... come on...

Ichabod ushers them across the field, uphill. Running. Lightning flashes across the sky. THUNDER RUMBLES.

A bolt strikes the windmill, and it EXPLODES...

SHOCKWAVE DEAFENING. The rotors bust apart. Splinters of burning wood spin all directions.

ACROSS THE FIELD, Ichabod, Katrina and Young Masbath keep running. There is a WOODEN CART parked ahead.

IN THE WINDMILL RUBBLE, the Horseman rises, shoving off burning debris. His flame-ravaged uniform smolders.

ACROSS THE FIELD, Ichabod stumbles onwards, but notices something horrible...

In the distance, Lady Van Tassel's white horse roams free.

ICHABOD
(as this registers)
Oh, no...

Young Masbath and Katrina are just past the cart when Lady Van Tassel rises from behind it, swings a plank...

SLAMS Ichabod in the chest and sends him down.

Lady Van Tassel grabs Katrina's hair, drags her.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Should have stayed away, Constable.

Ichabod gets up slow, furious, reaches to his holster, only to find it empty. He moves forward.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Keep back, or I kill her.

She takes out scissors, holds them to Katrina's neck. Katrina ceases struggling.

Ichabod keeps Masbath behind him, keeps his distance. Lady Van Tassel shoots a glance...

LADY VAN TASSEL
See him...

Far off, the Horseman strides from the wreckage.

LADY VAN TASSEL
You cannot kill what is already dead.

ICHABOD
Let her go!

LADY VAN TASSEL
Yes... yes. I think I will...

Lady Van Tassel spins and throws Katrina in the cart, shoving against it.

ICHABOD
No!

The cart rolls downhill. Ichabod moves forward.

Lady Van Tassel turns, brandishing the scissors, slashing and missing. Ichabod backs off.

DOWNHILL, the cart picks up speed, headed for the Horseman.

The Horseman starts running to meet it.

UPHILL, Lady Van Tassel grins.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Say goodbye to her.

Lady Van Tassel lunges, stabbing. Ichabod avoids, puts all his fury behind his fist -- punches her in the face.

Lady Van Tassel hits the ground and her bag falls open, sending the Horseman's skull rolling out...

The skull rolls... rolls... landing far away.

DOWNHILL, Katrina leaps out from the cart...

She lands hard.

The Horseman shoves the empty cart aside, still on the move.

UPHILL, Ichabod sees the skull. He runs towards it.

Lady Van Tassel grabs Ichabod by the ankle. He falls.

DOWNHILL, Katrina runs back. The Horseman is catching up.

UPHILL, Ichabod tries to pull free from Lady Van Tassel.

Young Masbath comes behind her - BAM - hits her in the head with the wooden plank. She's out.

Ichabod scrambles to his feet.

DOWNHILL, the Horseman catches Katrina, taking her by the hair as she falls to her knees and screams.

UPHILL, Ichabod runs... grasps the Horseman's skull.

He runs towards the Horseman and Katrina.

DOWNHILL, Katrina struggles, but the Horseman holds her ready by her hair... raises his sword...

UPHILL, Ichabod throws the skull...

ICHABOD
Horseman!

The skull spins through the air...

The Horseman drops Katrina, reaches up...

Catches the skull.

Katrina runs.

Ichabod runs to meet her, grabs her as she falls, exhausted. Together, they back away from the Horseman.

The Horseman holds the skull out, then brings it to his shoulders, to its rightful place. *THUNDER POUNDS.*

TRANSFORMATION begins -- blood and flesh rise up from the Horseman's throat and grip the skull.

Young Masbath drops the plank, watching in awe.

The Horseman's reformation continues. Muscle forms. Liquids become solids. He is made whole once more, the same evil, human face we saw in Baltus' stories.

He looks to Ichabod and Katrina, touches his restored face.

Daredevil rides up, SCREECHING. The Horseman replaces his sword and climbs into the saddle.

He rides towards Katrina and Ichabod, but passes them by. They are so exhausted they fall down.

Young Masbath backs up as the Horseman comes, but the Horseman does not want him either.

The Horseman leans to grab Lady Van Tassel's unconscious form, pulls her up across Daredevil's back.

He rides away with her.

Ichabod and Katrina watch him go. They look at each other, then kiss gratefully.

Ichabod looks to Young Masbath.

ICHABOD
How are you?

YOUNG MASBATH
Tired.

Ichabod smiles and holds out his arm. Masbath comes over. Group hug.. Lightning brightens the farmland around them.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, BURIAL GROUND -- NIGHT

HOOFBEATS. The Horseman enters the clearing, keeping a hand on Lady Van Tassel. Ahead, the twisted tree awaits.

Lady Van Tassel is awakening, face bloody. She turns her head and looks forward. She screams.

The twisted tree's wound opens, wide and glowing.

Daredevil picks up speed...

Daredevil leaps just as a lightning bolt blasts down, striking the Horseman.

For an instant, Horseman and horse are transformed, SKELETONS OF LIGHT, entering the tree.

Silence and smoke. At the tree, Lady Van Tassel's hand sticks out from the tight-shut suture.

The sewn wound on her palm seeps blood.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET, ICHABOD'S HOME -- DAY

A bright, busy day in New York. A coach pulls up to Ichabod's home. Ichabod is the driver. He gets off, goes and opens the coach door. He helps Katrina down. Next, Young Masbath sticks his head out.

Ichabod goes about unloading bags. Katrina holds Young Masbath's hand, and they look down the street in wonder.

THE END